

Hafa Adai!

Inos nominates Seman to DLNR,
Rabauliman to Commerce. » PAGE 3

Farmer's co-op eyes new board
to resolve 'divisions' » PAGE 5

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75¢

DPS chief: Search for Li ongoing

» Commissioner belies rumor that body parts were found

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie.delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The search for missing Saipan Fresh Market owner Zhi Yuan Li is still ongoing and there were no body parts found anywhere on the island, according to Department of Public Safety Commissioner James C. Deleon Guerrero.

In a news briefing yesterday afternoon, Deleon Guerrero squashed widespread rumors that Li's body or parts of a body had been found.

"At this point of time none of that has occurred. We have not located the

See DPS on Page 4

CUC barred—for now—from disconnecting CHC

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

The Commonwealth Utilities Corp. has been prohibited from disconnecting any utility services to the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. or at the Commonwealth Health Center until their legal dispute is resolved.

In a preliminary injunction yesterday, Superior Court Associate Judge David A. Wiseman also ordered CHCC to continue to pay its current and monthly usage bills—not including late fees, interests, and penalties—for

See CUC on Page 4



FERDIE DE LA TORRE

Department of Public Safety commissioner James C. Deleon Guerrero stresses a point as DPS police information officer Travis Hurst listens at yesterday's news briefing pertaining to the disappearance of businessman Zhi Yuan Li.

Visitor arrivals up 17 pct. in Dec.

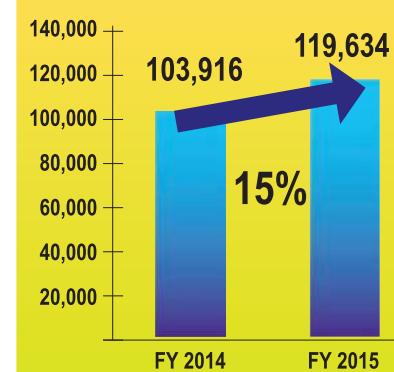
December 2014 visitor arrivals to the Northern Mariana Islands rose 17 percent compared to December 2013, according to the Marianas Visitors Authority. Arrivals to the islands of Saipan, Tinian and Rota registered 44,910 visitors in December 2014, compared to 38,352 visitors received in December 2013.

Arrivals from Korea soared 43 percent in December to 19,485 visitors, positioning Korea as the No. 1 source of visitors to the NMI in December and the largest monthly increase for

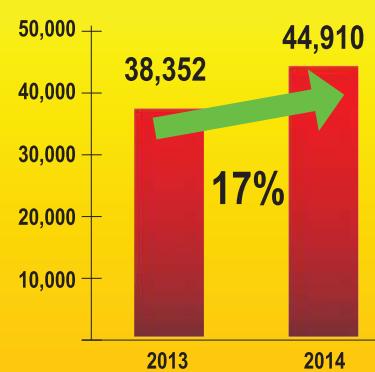
the Korea market in 2014. Targeting the winter high season, Asiana Airlines operated additional flights to Saipan from Seoul four times a week beginning Dec. 2 using an Airbus A320 with 171 seats. The strong upward trend in Korean arrivals is expected to continue throughout the winter season with additional seats coming online. Jeju Air is also planning to open an FIT lounge on Saipan in January to provide better service to its rapidly growing number of Korean

See VISITOR on Page 4

Visitor Arrivals Year to Date FY 2014 vs. FY 2015



Visitor Arrivals Dec. 2013 vs. Dec. 2014



Source: Marianas Visitors Authority

INSIDE



BUSINESS

Cheap oil doesn't only mean cheaper gas in the tank.

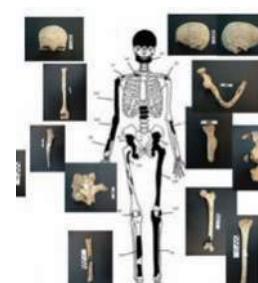
» PAGE 13



WORLD

Thousands march in a funeral procession for a Hezbollah fighter killed by an Israeli airstrike.

» PAGE 16



LIFE & STYLE

Human bones found in an ancient tomb in Greece belong to at least five corpses.

» PAGE 20

GOT A NEWS TIP?
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Local

Man arrested for possession of stolen iPhone; companion throws ‘ice’ in car chase with cops

A man was arrested for alleged possession of a stolen iPhone 5C while his companion engaged police officers in a car chase and threw a small baggie of methamphetamine or “ice” on a road in Susupe Thursday night.

Daniel Buniag, 25, was arrested for receiving stolen property, while John P. Deleon Guerrero, 38, was apprehended for illegal possession of a controlled substance and eluding a police officer.

At a hearing yesterday, Superior Court Associate Judge Kenneth L. Govendo allowed Buniag to post a \$125 cash bail and

imposed a \$10,000 cash bail for Deleon Guerrero’s temporary release.

Assistant public defender Eden Schwartz was appointed counsel for Buniag. The court will appoint a private counsel for Deleon Guerrero.

Police detective Catherine B. Pangelinan stated in her report that a 17-year-old teen and his dad went to the Department of Public Safety last Thursday to file a theft complaint.

Pangelinan said that, according to the 17-year-old student, a man approached him in front of Toha Market in San

Antonio last Jan. 12 and asked for a ride to the Salvation Army in Chalan Piao, about half a mile from Toha Market. When they got there, the man grabbed the student’s iPhone 5C worth \$550 and fled.

At 4:58pm last Thursday, the student answered a call on his mother’s cellular phone and was told by a man on the other end that he can have his iPhone back if he pays \$220.

The caller stated he would call back to arrange their meeting place. After a few minutes, the man called again, asking the student if he has the money already.

He said he’s also not surprised that Sen. Justo Quitugua (Ind-Saipan) opted to join the majority in the SNILD.

“[Rep. John Paul Sablan] has the numbers and we’ll let the process go through. I’m not surprised that Justo has committed to J.P. I have great respect for the senator and I respect his decision.”

The 19th Legislature was sworn in last Jan. 12 with Tebuteb and his group at the outside looking in, as a bloc composed of seven NMI Republican Party representatives led by now vice speaker Ralph Demapan (R-Saipan) and four independents led by Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero formed a majority coalition.

Joining Tebuteb in the minority at the House are Reps. Edmund Villagomez (Ind-Saipan), Ralph N. Yumul (Ind-Saipan), Anthony T. Benavente (Ind-Saipan), Roman Benavente (Ind-Saipan), Larry Deleon Guerrero (Ind-Saipan), Edwin Propst (Ind-Saipan), Vinson Sablan (Ind-Saipan), and Blas Jonathan “B.J.” Attao (Ind-Saipan).

The SNILD has set its organizational meeting this Friday, Jan. 23, 10am at the House chamber.

From there, the student and his father proceeded to the police station to report the incident.

At the Commonwealth Bureau of Investigation parking lot, the student called the man’s cellphone number and told him he has the money.

The man set the meeting place at the Subway parking lot in Chalan Piao, saying he would be in a white car.

Pangelinan said she, along with the student, drove to Subway and waited in the parking

lot with other police detectives surrounding the perimeter.

At 8:40pm, a detective spotted a white car with license plate AEP-751 in the parking lot of Gold Ribbon, which is located across Subway.

The car then proceeded to the parking lot of Subway, where Buniag got down from the front passenger side and made a call on his cell phone to contact the student.

Pangelinan said that when the student’s cell phone rang, she instructed the other detectives to arrest Buniag, who was in front of Subway.

Buniag was found in possession of the iPhone 5C in his

pocket and the student identified the phone as his, Pangelinan said.

The white car, on the other hand, parked in front of the nearby Mobil gas station. A man got down from the left rear passenger and looked toward Subway.

Pangelinan said she ran toward the man, showed him her police badge, and told him to stop. The man rushed back inside the car and sped off toward As Perdido.

A police vehicle followed the car and other patrol cars joined the chase.

A patrol officer later spot-

See IPHONE on Page 4

ON BILL CHANGING CHCC ADVISORY BOARD TO GOVERNING

Santos vows public hearings this time

By MARK RABAGO

mark_rabago@saipantribune.com

ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Health and Welfare.

SB 19-04 states that the structure and business model creating the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. is not functioning and producing the results intended by Public Law 16-51—the law that created CHCC—and there are some other concerns regarding the act that need to be addressed.

One of the concerns is the need for a governing board of trustees instead of an advisory body.

“Accordingly, having a governing board of trustees would ultimately help to produce a higher degree of efficiency not just in the decision-making process but also in the overall planning and formulation of effective management policies,” the bill reads.

The purpose of 19-04 is to amend certain provisions of Public Law 16-51 to allow for a smooth transition from the department to the new healthcare corporation, therefore empowering the board of trustees “to make policies and perform all acts necessary and expedient to ensure the delivery of quality care in a financially responsible manner for the people of the Commonwealth.”

Santos said she has communicated with the chairwoman of

the Committee on Health and Welfare at the House, Rep. Felicidad Ogumoro (R-Saipan), who also concurred with the prefiling of the bill as well as the conduct of public hearings on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota.

“Hopefully we could conduct public hearings at the earliest time possible. This way we would accord to our general public the opportunity to provide testimony regarding this measure,” she said.

It will be recalled that the House hearing on SB 18-52 last Dec. 29 saw CHCC CEO Esther Muña and the CHCC board of trustees, led by chair Joaquin Torres, getting embroiled in a fiery debate that at times broke the decorum of the lower chamber.

At one point, House Speaker Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero (Ind-Saipan) and then floor leader Ralph Demapan (R-Saipan) called for both camps to calm down and that order be restored in the session after Torres called one of the witnesses a liar.

Rep. Roman Benavente (Ind-Saipan) was so incensed with the infighting among the islands’ healthcare executives that the Precinct 1 representative scolded both Muña and Torres for their unprofessional behavior.

Tebuteb ready to lead minority at House

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Rep. Ramon A. Tebuteb (Ind-Saipan) is ready to lead his nine-member minority bloc at the House of Representatives.

“We already have a general understanding on the plan because each member is unique in his own profession. They have their own identity and their own goals and agenda that would be beneficial our people,” he said.



Tebuteb

the Judiciary, and the entire Commonwealth should all band together now to solve the islands’ biggest issues.

“The foundations of a government are public services—safety, health, and education. There’s always the economy but if you don’t take care of the foundations then what will happen to the economy because it’s part of it,” he said.

The de facto leader of the House minority said one way of diffusing conflict is by trying to put oneself in the shoes of the person with an opposing view.

“We fairly laid it down on the table as a group and if there are differences, we make sure we handle that and understand that. If you’re reluctant to support that, it is important to see yourself on the other’s shoes. With that you can have a fair idea of the opposing view and by then you can have a compromise.”

Tebuteb also is resigned to the fact that he may yield the chairmanship of the Saipan and Northern Islands Legislative Delegation in the 19th Legisla-

tive

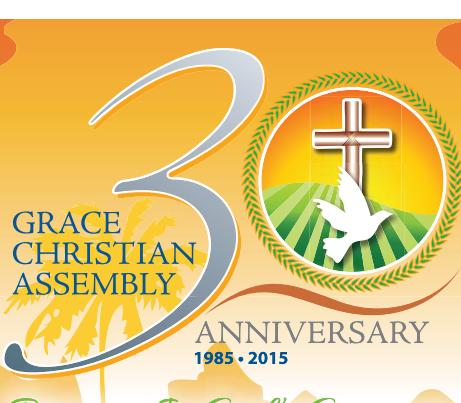
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For more information, contact Becky Robles at beckyrobles0409@gmail.com or (670) 789-8264

The purpose of the event is to raise funds for the future site of Grace Christian Assembly – Tanapag

NO HILLS!

Inos nominates Seman to DLNR, Rabauliman to Commerce

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Gov. Eloy S. Inos and Lt. Gov. Ralph DLG. Torres have nominated former representative Richard Seman to head the Department of Land and Natural Resources, while also informing Mark Rabauliman that he will stay on as Department of Commerce secretary. Both would serve in an acting capacity until the Senate confirms them.



Seman, who just earlier this month bid adieu to his House seat, said he is grateful for Inos and Torres' trust in him to lead once again an important agency like DLNR.

"I talked to the governor last Thursday and he told me his decision to appoint me. I said I'm very thankful. It's always been my passion. I have 24 years of experience in natural resources," he told *Saipan Tribune* in a phone interview yesterday.

Seman served as DLNR secretary from 2004 to 2006 at the tail end of the administration of former governor Juan N. Babauta.

He said he couldn't wait to start working again at DLNR. Seman takes over from now Sen. Arnold I. Palacios (R-

Saipan), who was sworn in as senator in the 19th Legislature last Jan. 12.

"I've got letter of appointment to make it official that I was nominated and a memorandum delegating me as acting secretary so I can report to work. I'm also preparing the Senate requirements like drug testing, police clearance, and financial disclosure," he said.

Seman said he already has a lot of ideas on how he can be more productive in his second go-around at DLNR.

"There are a lot of areas that Mr. Palacios has started that we need to continue. There are also a lot of programs that need to come online to improve our natural resources, especially in both in farming and fishing."

He said two things he will be heavily involved in—as far as the administration is concerned—are submerged lands and the Marianas Trench National Marine Monument.

"There've been something happening with the proposed Monument but it's a slow pace. There's already something in place so we need to make sure we always have our interests in it and it won't be overlooked," he said.

Burden of proof on NMI for ESA-proposed species

By DENNIS B. CHAN
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REPORTER

Sixteen plant and animal species in the CNMI have been proposed for listing as endangered or threatened through the Fish and Wildlife Service, out of ongoing and projected threats and purported lax regulations and enforcement—leaving the burden of proof on the CNMI to find otherwise.

The public comment periods for the proposed ruling have been opened twice since last year. The current comment period is ongoing and ends on Feb. 11 next month. Comments last closed in December, after opening in October.

It is believed that there are more individual species left in the region than what the U.S. Wildlife Service accounted for. *Saipan Tribune* learned that biologists from the CNMI Division of Fish and Wildlife have been working to see if the number of remaining species listed by the Service is warranted.

One CNMI plant species—the *Maesa walkeri*—has a "very limited number" left, with "fewer than 50 in the wild," according to the Service, as the plant appears to

be one of the first appointees to the Cabinet, Seman said this came about because of need on the part of the Inos administration.

"With Arnold getting elected to the Senate, they needed a new secretary. It just so happened that it was good timing. I haven't had much vacation but I'm pretty happy about it. I'm excited to be back in the mix and see what I can do. I'm a project-oriented person and I want projects done," he said.

While Palacios was on leave

to campaign for last year's elections, Manny Pangelinan served as acting DLNR secretary.

For his part, Rabauliman confirmed that he was nominated to be Commerce secretary, adding that he looks forward to continue to lead the agency, which is responsible in growing the economy.

"I am very honored and humbled by the support and trust that our governor and lieutenant governor has in me. We have some plans and activities that I want to push and

execute for Commerce and our economy," he said in an email to *Saipan Tribune*.

Rabauliman, who is off-island, has been serving as acting secretary since former Commerce secretary

and now Sen. Sixto Igisomar (R-Saipan) took a leave of absence to run in the special elections for senator. Igisomar subsequently won the vacated Senate seat of former senator Ray Yumul.

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Girl, 16, hurt after car slams into tree

A 16-year-old girl was injured when the car she was driving swerved and slammed into a tree along Flame Tree Road near the Francisco C. Ada International Airport yesterday afternoon.

Department of Public Safety

CUC

From Page 1

the remainder of the lawsuit or until ordered by the court.

Citing precedent, the judge said the court will issue a preliminary injunction when it is necessary to preserve the status quo between parties to an action pending a final determination on the merits.

Wiseman said that CHCC has made a prima facie showing of likely success on the merits—at least in part—of the underlying suit.

Wiseman said the possibility of irreparable harm—which is actual, imminent, and not speculative—weighs in favor of CHCC in deciding whether to grant injunction relief.

The judge said the hardship that CUC will suffer is minimized by the court's own order requiring CHCC to at least pay its current usage bill until its motion for preliminary injunction is decided.

On the other hand, the judge noted, the hardship facing CHCC if the injunction were not granted far outweigh any remainder of monetary or financial interest CUC would incur should the court deny CHCC's request for injunctive relief.

"Avoiding redundant analyses, the court stresses the detrimental and potentially devastating effect such a disconnection of any of CHCC's operations would have on its ability to provide critical care services, retain CMS certification, and otherwise sustain the welfare of the people of the Commonwealth," Wiseman said.

He said the effect on the public interest would be deleterious if the court declined to grant CHCC's requested relief, and that this factor also weighs in favor of granting CHCC's request.

The judge also ruled that the balance of the hardships tips sharply in CHCC's favor, as

IPHONE

From Page 2

ted the white car by the Chalan Kanoa District Social Hall and activated his emergency light and siren, but the vehicle refused to stop.

Several other patrol cars chased the white car inside Chalan Kanoa toward Susupe.

A police officer saw that some items were thrown out from the white car in Susupe. A detective retrieved the thrown item—a small bag containing "ice."

The white car was finally blocked south of Joeten Shop-

police information officer Travis Hurst said the girl suffered minor contusions caused by the safety belt.

Hurst said DPS received a call about a vehicular crash yesterday at 5:26pm along Flame

providing critical, irreplaceable, and potentially life-saving healthcare services is infinitely more important than any financial interest of a public corporation.

CUC is suing CHCC to collect utility services in the amount of \$9,690,875, together with pre-judgment interest. It was last reported that the hospital owes CUC \$11 million in past due accounts.

It was reported that CHCC offered to pay \$325,000 for its monthly utility consumption, but CUC rejected it as CHCC's average consumption is about \$540,000 a month.

CUC has threatened to disconnect unspecified utility services to CHCC.

Last May 12, CHCC, through the Office of the Attorney General, filed a motion for temporary restraining order and preliminary injunction. CHCC asked the court to restrain CUC from disconnecting utility services for failure to pay what they claim were and are exorbitant and illegal late charges.

Last May 21, Wiseman granted CHCC's request for TRO.

Wiseman heard the motion for preliminary injunction last May 29.

CUC, through counsel James Sirok, opposed CHCC's motion for preliminary injunction. Sirok argued that CUC never threatened immediate disconnection of services to CHCC following the underlying lawsuit.

Sirok stated that any disconnection of services would only be to what it deemed to be "non-essential" portions of CHCC's operations.

Sirok also claimed that harm would result to CUC if CHCC failed to pay its late charges and make current its utility account with CUC.

Wiseman then placed the motion for preliminary injunction under advisement. He gave the order yesterday that granted CHCC's request.

ping Center in Susupe by patrol and traffic officers.

The driver of the car was identified as Deleon Guerrero, also known as Juan Masi. The male passenger in the rear was also taken to the police station.

Deleon Guerrero allegedly confessed that the "ice" in the small bag was his and that he threw it during the chase. He said he did not stop during the chase because his "adrenaline kicked in."

Pangelinan said Buniag also confessed that he was aware that the iPhone 5C was stolen and was supposed to be traded for \$220 with its owner. (*Ferdie de la Torre*)

Tree Road.

When a traffic police officer arrived at the scene, he saw a car next to a tree off the side of the road.

Xavier High School entrance exam on Saturday

This is to notify students interested in sitting for the Xavier High School Entrance Exam, which will be administered at the Mt. Carmel School on Sat-

The officer's investigation showed that the girl was driving too fast for the road conditions, causing her to lose control of the car.

The car drove off the roadway and collided with a tree. Due to the impact, the car's airbags deployed.

DPS Fire medics checked the

three hours. Exam takers are required to bring No. 2 pencils. To reserve your seat for the exam, RSVP with Ivan A. Blanco 285-8768.

Xavier High School is a college preparatory school steeped

VISITOR

From Page 1

customers to the CNMI.

Arrivals from China grew 34 percent in December to 12,886 visitors. In 2015, the MVA continues to work with Century Tours and Tinian Dynasty to launch a variety of marketing programs in support of China charter flights. The MVA is also launching co-ops with Brand USA to host a joint travel trade road show as well as influential trade show to promote the CNMI targeting Lunar New Year from Feb. 18-24.

Arrivals from Japan fell 12 percent to 9,942 visitors in December. Air seat supply in December dropped by 19 percent compared to December 2013 as Asiana Airlines operated three charters in December as opposed to 11 in December 2013, which led to the decrease in air seats from Osaka by 1,593 seats. Japan Airlines operated two direct charter flights from Chubu Centrair International

Airport on Dec. 27 and Dec. 30 using B737 aircraft, providing 288 additional seats with all seats sold exclusively by JTB World Vacations.

Arrivals from Russia fell 71 percent to 422 visitors in December as a result of the suspension of direct flights in August. Russia's economic instability and collapsing Russian ruble have caused a dramatic fall in demand for international travel from Russia. Despite these challenges, the MVA is in discussions with potential airline partners to re-establish direct non-stop flights from Russia to the CNMI and is actively working with key Russian travel agents to create new tour packages targeting tourists with higher income who are less responsive to soaring tour prices to the NMI as a result of the collapsing currency.

Economic highlights

During the first half of December, the Japanese yen depreciated slightly against the dollar, from 117.33 yen to the dollar at

the end of November, to 119.76 yen as of Dec. 31. JTB has predicted that Japanese outbound travel will increase 0.4 percent to 17 million in 2015, and the average spend on overseas trips will increase 2.0 percent.

Korea's real gross domestic product (chained volume measure of GDP) grew by 0.9 percent in the third quarter compared to the previous quarter and matched advanced estimates. The South Korean won/dollar exchange rate rose 9.54 won over the past month to close at 1096.73 against the U.S. dollar. During December, the won continued to weaken on the dollar's strength.

The National Bureau of Statistics said China's consumer prices grew by 1.4 percent year-on-year in November, the slowest increase in five years. November's consumer price index, the main gauge of inflation, dipped 0.2 percent against the previous month, while data remained flat in October. The value of the Chinese currency renminbi, or the yuan,

DPS

From Page 1

victim in this particular incident," the commissioner said.

He disclosed that DPS detectives are working closely with the Federal Bureau of Investigation as well as U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement in an effort to locate and hopefully rescue the 43-year-old Li.

On Monday, rumors spread that Li had been beheaded and that his head and body parts have already been found.

Saipan Tribune has been contacting DPS since Sunday after learning that Li has been reported missing since Saturday afternoon, but DPS only released brief details confirming the incident yesterday at 3:08am—or after three days.

Deleon Guerrero admitted yesterday that they indeed tried not to inform the media because they were still doing a search operation. He said they decided as a department to withhold information early on because of the fact that the victim had not been located.

"Sometimes, what generally happens in these type of circumstances unfortunately is that it leads to something more tragic," he said.

The commissioner explained that it was a judgment call based on his conversation with the department's investigators.

"We're hoping quite frankly that the media would not dis-

cover this but you did," said Deleon Guerrero at the news briefing.

He said they have been working with Li's family and the family too wanted the fact that Li has been missing to be kept quiet.

"The reason is because we don't want anything to happen to the victim," the commissioner said.

Deleon Guerrero confirmed news reports that Li's white Toyota Tacoma pickup truck was found by a patrol officer on a dirt road between Ladder Beach and Obyan Beach on Sunday at 8am.

The commissioner said he has no information what items were found in Li's truck.

"As far as I know, the vehicle looks to be in good order. It appears to have been driven there and just parked there. There was no damage to the car. There was nothing messy inside the vehicle. Everything appears to be in kind of normal order," he said.

Investigators towed the truck as its key could not be found.

Deleon Guerrero said there is nothing to suggest at this point of time that foul play is involved.

He said investigators combed the entire Obyan Beach and Ladder Beach areas since Saturday and that much of the search operation continued on Sunday.

DPS activated its search and rescue unit as well as its Tactical Response Enforcement Team to assist in the search at Obyan and Ladder Beach areas.

After the initial news blackout, Deleon Guerrero is now appealing to the public for information that will lead to locating Li.

"We are appealing to members of the community that anyone with information as to where this particular person may be to give us a call at Commonwealth Bureau of Investigation at 664-9042 or the Crime Stoppers at 234-7272," he said.

Since the last double homicide incident in November 2014, DPS has assigned five additional investigators to the Commonwealth Bureau of Investigation to assist the office in its current workload.

Deleon Guerrero said they also initiated a new activation protocols.

"If anyone is reported missing, we immediately send out teams that go out and conduct searches and follow up on leads," he said.

The commissioner noted that the two double homicides in February and November and Li's disappearance point to the same group of families and same areas in Koblerville.

"Something is wrong. Something seriously is wrong. And those things need to be dug up further," said Deleon Guerrero, adding that they're doing the best they can right now in coordination with federal law enforcement partners.

Li is the nephew of Hai Ren Li, one of two Chinese farmers who were murdered and their bodies dumped at the old

girl and transported her to the Commonwealth Health Center.

Travis said the girl had no passenger when the crash happened. (*Ferdie de la Torre*)

in the Jesuit tradition of excellence. The mission of Xavier High School is to educate students to be competent, conscientious, and compassionate leaders whose lives are guided by the Christian call of service. (*PR*)

weakened by 17 basis points to 6.1247 against the U.S. dollar in its central parity rate, according to the China Foreign Exchange Trading System. Meanwhile, the China Tourism Academy recently released its China Travel Agency Industry Development Report 2014. According to the report, the core position of traditional travel agencies in the China tourism economy is weakening; the market's preference is moving toward FIT travel and the development of online travel is contributing to this shift.

From Dec. 16 to Dec. 22 consumer prices in Russia increased by a record breaking 0.9 percent, exceeding the average increase for one week in November by three times. According to Rosstat, from the beginning of December the prices increased by 1.7 percent and from the beginning of the year by 10.4 percent. The annual inflation in Russia in 2014 is estimated at 11.5 percent. The Russian currency remains unstable against the dollar, recording 56.24 rubles to dollar on Dec. 31. (*MVA*)

runway in Koblerville last November.

As for some local individuals implicated in the two double homicides, the commissioner said they were all interviewed both at the state and local levels. He declined to elaborate.

Last Feb. 23, the bodies of Guo Huang Xu and his wife, Qing Xiu Zheng, both farmers, were found charred inside their house that had been burned to the ground. Police classified the case as a double homicide.

Deleon Guerrero said they have been communicating with a Chinese group on the island and they are providing some information that is giving investigators leads.

"We are pursuing every single lead that is coming to our department," he added.

He said none of the information, however, had led investigators so far to locate Li.

"We do not know at this point in time as to what his status is and we are hoping that we can find him in good health," the commissioner said.

DPS police information officer Travis Hurst confirmed that the family reported Li's disappearance to DPS on Saturday at 7:56pm.

Hurst said Li was last seen on Saturday at 11am seeing a friend at a tire shop in Puerto Rico.

Li's daughters, ages 13 and 23, are on Saipan. Li is already separated from his wife, who is in China, a family member told *Saipan Tribune*.

Farmer's co-op eyes new board to resolve 'divisions'

By DENNIS B. CHAN
dennis_chan@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

With "divisions" and lack of support besetting the current board, an election of new board members is on the agenda for the CNMI Farmer's Cooperative Association's first general membership meeting, whenever it does occur, according to co-op officials.

It was earlier reported the meeting would be held on Jan. 14 but this has been pushed back.

Co-op treasurer Ignacio Concepcion said yesterday that only three board members supported the market: himself, president Maria "Frica" Pangelinan, and secretary Isidoro Cabrera.

"We are seven [board members] and the [other] four don't

COTA served over 7K in 2014

The Commonwealth Office on Transit Authority reports that it accommodated 7,504 riders last year.

August topped the most number of passengers last year, totaling 923.

According to COTA, most riders avail of COTA services for going home.

January ridership totaled 435; February had 544; March had 625; April, 700; May, 774; June, 645; July, 606; September, 592; October, 553; November, 506; and December, 601.

Majority of the people seeking public transportation are residential customers. Second is public assistance for persons with disabilities, while a third is for work and medical needs.

COTA also provided transportation for shopping, medical, and other services such as going to class, market, and paying bills.

For more information on COTA's Call-A-Ride program, contact 664-2690. (Jayson Camacho)

ever come here," he said, adding that officials have selected and confirmed a new set of seven board members.

"We informed them already. They agree, so what we'll do is have a meeting," he said.

The January meeting was postponed because the co-op did not have enough time to notify the members by letter, according to Cabrera in a separate interview.

He said the market is "trying to form a board." He said he would plan with Pangelinan for the next meeting.

"We are trying to organize and select people who really

support the market, because the present board is divided. There are board [members] in the co-op who are supporting the Sabalu [Market]."

He described this as a "a big conflict of interest." He said they are trying to have a board "who in their heart support the co-op."

"There are seven board [members] right now, and only three are active in supporting the co-op. The other four are not supporting the co-op. They never go there [to the market] and sell, and are members of the Sabalu Market," he said.

The Sabalu Market has been labeled as the Garapan market's

competitors. They operate in the Susupe area on Saturdays.

According to Cabrera, the current board members are Pangelinan; vice president JM Guerrero; himself, Concepcion, Manuel Borja, Ramon Camacho, and Jesus Castro.

There are 70 or so co-op members, according to Cabrera. He also indicated he would stay on with the board, but Pangelinan told him last week that she "might step down" at the meeting.

"We will probably be hiring her as a manager or consultant," he said, adding that the co-op intends to have her with them "all the way."

NMHC finalizing Garapan Annex RFP

By JAYSON CAMACHO
jayson_camacho@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Northern Marianas Housing Corp. is now in the process of finalizing a request for proposal for the Garapan Annex, according to NMHC deputy corporate director Jeannie Mafnas.

"We are currently in the process of finalizing the RFP," Mafnas confirmed yesterday through email.

She said that NMHC is preparing for the board of directors meeting on Feb. 4. From there they will find out whether things are in place to proceed with the RFP.

This comes almost three years after the decision to establish the

Garapan Annex was first tabled.

The Garapan Annex is an area located across the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. and Garapan Elementary School.

NMHC owns the 40,000 square-meter lot and it contains 45 units that have not been used for years. Several investors have expressed interest in developing the property.

The RFP for the Garapan Annex was first issued in December 2012 but this was later cancelled due to unspecified legal issues.

Back then, Mariana Islands Housing Authority or MIHA, now NMHC, allowed NMHC to lease the area for commercial development.

How's Your Hearing?

Specializing in:

- Hearing Evaluations
- Custom fitted hearing aids
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- Custom Communication Devices

- Friday, January 23rd
- Saturday, January 24th

at Marianas Medical Center in Garapan

8:30am - 4:00pm
9:00am - 1:00pm



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Hearing
Aids

All interested patients should call
Marianas Medical Clinic for scheduling

234-3925/7

Insurance accepted: AETNA and Medicaid



Jennifer Ross, BC-HIS
*Board Certified in Hearing
Instrument Sciences*
Email: ross@guangcell.net

Business Development Manager - China

Bridge Immigration Investments is seeking a highly motivated and driven Business Professional with a proven track record of success to support our growing Residence and Citizenship-by-Investment business, primarily focusing on our US EB5 Visa Program.

Core Competencies and Experience

- You are energetic, self-motivated, outgoing, hands-on and willing to take the initiative, with very strong negotiation skills
- You are able to self-manage and are goal and results driven
- Your interpersonal, oral and written communication, presentation and organizational skills are excellent
- You demonstrate passion, persistence, creativity and a determination to get things done
- You have verifiable success in working in the legal, financial services, real estate or 'immigrant investor' industries
- Knowledge and experience of the 'immigrant investor' market is preferable but not essential
- An undergraduate degree in Law, Business, Economics or Marketing is ideal
- You must have a willingness to travel
- Proficiency with Microsoft Office products including, but not limited to, Word, Excel, Outlook and PowerPoint
- Excellent command of written and spoken English and Chinese.

Responsibilities

- Reporting to the CEO of the Saipan office, you will be accountable for generating significant business revenue each year, and meeting agreed sales and business targets as defined by management
- Developing new business via developing sales and marketing channels with Marketing Agents in China
- Working with other internal departments to develop appropriate solutions in order to maximize business success
- Planning, preparing, and executing high impact meetings with client prospects and potential partners
- Helping with the preparation and translation of our marketing collaterals in to Chinese
- Maximizing revenue growth with existing accounts and our partner base
- Representing Bridge Immigration at industry events and conferences

Scope

- Salary: From USD 2,500 plus excellent commission driven compensation (depending on experience). Accommodation in Saipan can be provided for the first 2 months.
- Applicants will be primarily based in our Saipan head office but will be expected to travel reasonably regularly
- Applicants with networks and interest in developing the China market will be considered for this role

Contact

A full Curriculum Vitae and Covering Letter should be sent to Philip James at phil.james@bccnmi.com

Bridge Capital, LLC, PMB 29 Box 10001, Saipan MP 96950

Executive Assistant Job Description

Our fast-growing international investment company, based in the CNMI, is looking for an Executive Assistant to support the Vice President/Chief Operational Officer with his day-to-day administrative needs and organizational duties. The responsibilities of this position include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Responsible for the effective coordination and follow-up of the activities and commitments of the VP/COO by producing and managing a master calendar of key events, dates, and deadlines that are critical to the conduct of the company's business.
- Researches, prioritizes, and follows up on incoming issues and concerns addressed to the VP/COO and determines the appropriate course of action, referral or response. Exercises sound judgment by keeping the VP/COO abreast of any issues that may arise internally and/or externally which could potentially impact the VP/COO or the company as a whole.
- Composes and prepares correspondence that may be confidential in nature. Communicates with a high degree of discretion, via phone, email, and US mail to directors, councils, management, staff, public, vendors, and other organizations.
- Prioritizes conflicting demands; handles matters expeditiously, proactively and follows through on projects to successful completion.
- Provides high level research and editorial support to the VP/COO.
- Arranges corporate travel and meetings by developing itineraries and agendas; booking flights and other transportation; arranging lodging and meeting accommodations.
- Completes projects and special assignments by establishing objectives; determining priorities; managing time; gaining cooperation of others; monitoring progress; problem solving; making adjustments to plans.
- Organizes relevant documents to be reviewed by VP/COO to be catalogued into the Company's database.
- Performs other duties as necessary.
- Requirements:
- Excellent oral and written communication and human relation skills.
- Must work well in a team environment and must be able to build and maintain effective working relationships.
- Ability to maintain and protect the confidentiality of information.
- Must be poised, patient, courteous, and maintain a professional manner.
- Willingness to work a flexible schedule to achieve the needs of the company.
- Must be detail oriented, results oriented, and be able to multi-task and work in a fast paced environment.
- Must work well under pressure, set and meet deadlines, be able to manage several priorities in a day.
- Must be dependable, adaptable, creative, and self-motivated.
- Bachelor's degree or equivalent work experience is required.
- Administrative support in legal industry or related field preferred.
- Proficiency in Microsoft Office Suite.

Marketing Executive / Personal Assistant (Chinese Speaking)

Bridge Immigration Investments is seeking a highly motivated and driven Business Professional with a proven track record of success to support our growing Residence and Citizenship-by-Investment business, primarily focusing on our US EB5 Visa Program.

Job Descriptions:

- Collect necessary information from related parties and generate various reports such as sales reports and market analysis in English or Chinese;
- Translate relevant news / articles and other information in different languages (English/Chinese) and share the information with management;
- Assist the CEO to create monthly reports;
- Assist Senior Management to prepare presentation materials in Chinese;
- Work with our IT department to translate / add Chinese content on our websites
- Perform general administration duties including but not limited to filing, meeting preparation, travel bookings, online research etc.;
- Support the CEO in day-to-day operations

Job Requirements:

- Bachelor Degree in Business Management, Administration and Marketing or related disciplines;
- 2 years or above working experience and experience in the legal, financial services, real estate or 'immigrant investor' industries preferred
- Well versed with PC applications like MS Word, Excel, PowerPoint and Chinese Word

Processing:

- Excellent command of both spoken and written English and Chinese;
- Self-motivated, good writing and presentation skills
- Energetic and outgoing personality

Scope

- Salary: From USD 1,500 plus annual bonus. Short term accommodation will be provided.
- Applicants will need to work in our head office in Saipan then may be expected to travel between head office and China with the CEO

Contact

A full Curriculum Vitae and Covering Letter should be sent to Philip James at phil.james@bccnmi.com

Bridge Capital, LLC, PMB 29 Box 10001, Saipan MP 96950

Bridge Capital, LLC, PMB 29 Box 10001, Saipan MP 96950
or email at reneacia.sannicolas@bccnmi.com

Anti-cancer group hands out 278 vouchers in 2014

By JAYSON CAMACHO
jayson.camacho@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Commonwealth Cancer Association was able to issue 278 vouchers for their client assistance program last year. These vouchers amount to up to \$500 per year for eligible clients.

According to CCA program manager Juan L. Babauta, 81 clients were given the vouchers last year. Clients could receive more than one voucher as long as it doesn't exceed the \$500 cap.

For example, if a client's physician recommends the use of a wheelchair, the client may

get the wheelchair through CCA using the voucher and if the voucher amount is not enough, another would be issued but the total cannot exceed the \$500 cap.

Before a client could avail of the services that CCA provides, the client has to register

with CCA and fill up a "Request for Client Assistance" form, together with the prescription provided by a qualified physician.

"It is only eligible for those in the CNMI and are cancer patients," Babauta said.

The vouchers could be used for nutritional, therapeutic, or medical supplies, including short-term rental of medical equipment, mattresses, beds,

and other services that CCA can provide.

Babauta said the voucher system does not provide for medication unless the person with cancer is medically determined to be at the end of life.

"We provide the vouchers for assistance only and the money stays here in CCA, and if we approve the client, the clients can be provided with the assistance

based on approved prescriptions for supplies from approved vendors or purchased online for delivery directly to the client," he said.

Babauta said their clients increased from 47 to 81 last year, with the addition of 31 new ones.

Compared to 2013, though, the total number of clients decreased from 294 to 278.

CHCC needs lawmakers' support on bill prioritizing net metering

By JAYSON CAMACHO
jayson.camacho@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

In a bid to lower the utility costs of the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp., chief executive officer Esther Muña is urging lawmakers to support a Senate bill that would prioritize net metering.

With the corporation's utility cost averaging \$400,000 to \$500,000 a month, Muña believes Senate Bill 18-67 should be re-introduced in the new

Legislature to create a system that will allow net metering in the CNMI and lessen the cost of utilities for CHCC.

The hospital is in the process of installing a photovoltaic power system.

SB 18-67, introduced by former senator Pete P. Reyes, prioritizes net metering for health and education.

CHCC, with the support of Gov. Eloy S. Inos, had applied for a competitive grant with the U.S. Department of the Interior,

with technical assistance from the University of Hawaii. The purpose of the grant was for the establishment of a photovoltaic solar power system with net metering to lessen the cost of utilities to CHCC and lower the dependence on fossil fuels through the use of renewable energy. The hospital received the grant from DOI in the amount of \$560,000.

Moving forward, however, requires the prioritization of net metering for health. Following

the award, CHCC sought the assistance of the CNMI's 18th Legislature to ensure that net metering was defined in CNMI law and to ensure that the priority for interconnecting PV before the "on ramping" costs increases," Muña said.

According to her, the project management team that includes DOI and the National Renewable Energy Laboratory of the U.S. Department of Energy and University of Hawaii will be assisting with the overall project management.

Meanwhile, Muña said that CHCC also needed a systematic approach to become more energy efficient last year and the help with grants established that.

"Small investments and significant grants from the Energy office and from Capital Improvement Projects will assist us in this," Muña said.

Among the steps the corporation has taken to be more energy efficient include the heating, ventilating and air conditioning system upgrade, which began last year at the south side of the hospital, and

replacing one chiller with a more energy-efficient one and installing an energy efficient water cooling tower in the second building. The HVAC upgrade was funded by CIP money, while the Department of Public Works' Energy Office funded the chiller.

Other approaches for energy efficiency include the upgrading and retrofitting of the lighting system, including the installation of new light sources, fixtures, and controls.

Also included is the retro commissioning of facilities, identifying improper equipment sequencing, equipment or systems that need to be repaired or replaced, eliminating lighting in unoccupied areas, and obtaining CHCC community participation in cutting energy costs, such as turning off all equipment and lighting that does not interfere with or reduce patient care.

"We are proud of these efforts of energy efficiency and we hope with everyone's support, CHCC will reduce its utility cost and continue to provide quality services to

our people for many years to come," Muña said.

Needed support

Utility cost, according to Muña, is the second highest expenditure of CHCC, costing them more than \$6 million last year.

CHCC right now pays the base rate for government of \$0.1240 cost per kWh, infrastructure surcharge at a cost of \$0.0221 per kWh, and the leveled energy adjustment clause or LEAC at a cost of \$0.03043 per kWh. This totals to \$0.4504 per kWh.

"Healthcare industries, especially hospitals, are high consumers of energy and CHCC is no different. With CHCC, what happens inside the hospital and its health concerns, such as high census and complexity of care to patients, impact its energy use. The age of the medical equipment is also significant," Muña said.

According to her, daily occupancy is at a 95 percent in the medical and surgical wards and 100 percent in the intensive care units and these impact their utility bills tremendously.

COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION

PUBLIC NOTICE

This Notice is paid by NMHC with HUD funds.

COMBINED NOTICE OF FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT AND INTENT TO REQUEST RELEASE OF FUNDS

January 08, 2015

Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
Office of the Governor
Saipan, MP 96950 Tel: (670) 237-2200 or (670) 234-9447/6866

This notice shall satisfy the above-cited two separate but related procedural notification requirements.

REQUEST FOR RELEASE OF FUNDS

On or after January 30, 2015, the Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands will submit a request to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Honolulu Field Office, for the release of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Funds under Title I of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 (PL 93-383), as amended, to undertake the following projects and purposes in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands:

Project/Activity Type	Purpose	Location	Total Project Cost
Oleai Sports Complex Track and Field Renovation	To rehabilitate the rubberized surface of the track and field facility and to extend the perimeter fence from 4 ft. to 8 ft. in height.	Oleai, Saipan	\$772,368.80

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

The Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands has determined that the above-listed projects will have no significant impact on the human environment. Therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) is not required. Additional project information is contained in the Environmental Review Record (ERR) on file at the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation Central Office in Garapan, Saipan and may be examined or copied during regular work hours, Monday through Friday except CNMI or Austerity Holidays, from 7:30 A.M. to 4:30 P.M.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Any individual, group or agency disagreeing with this determination or wishing to comment on the projects may submit written comments to the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation, P.O. Box 500514, Saipan, MP 96950 or direct delivery to the central office in Garapan, Saipan. All comments received by January 30, 2015, will be considered by the Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands prior to authorizing submission of a request for release of funds. Commentors should specify which part of this Notice they are addressing.

RELEASE OF FUNDS

The Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands certifies to the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, HUD Honolulu Field Office that the Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and Governor Eloy S. Inos consent to accept the jurisdiction of the Federal Courts if an action is brought to enforce responsibilities in relation to the environmental review process, and that these responsibilities have been satisfied. The U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development HUD Honolulu Field Office acceptance of the certification satisfies its responsibilities under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 and related laws and authorities, and allows the Government of the Northern Mariana Islands to use Program Funds.

OBJECTION TO RELEASE OF FUNDS

The U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development HUD Honolulu Field Office will accept objections to its release of funds and the Government of the Northern Mariana Islands certification for a period of fifteen days following anticipated submission date or its actual receipt of the request (whichever is later) only if it is on one of the following bases: (a) the certification was not executed by the Certifying Officer of the Government of the Northern Mariana Islands; (b) the Government of the Northern Mariana Islands has omitted a step or failed to make a decision or finding required by the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development regulations at 24 CFR Part 58; (c) the grant recipient has incurred cost not authorized by 24 CFR Part 58 before approval of the release of funds by the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development; or (d) another Federal agency acting pursuant to 40 CFR Part 1504 has submitted a written finding that the project is unsatisfactory from the standpoint of environmental quality. Objections must be prepared and submitted in accordance with the required procedures of 24 CFR Part 58 and shall be addressed to the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Honolulu Field Office, 1132 Bishop Street, Suite 1400, Honolulu, Hawaii, 96813. Potential objectors should contact the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to verify the actual last day of the objection period.

/s/ ELOY S. INOS
Governor



Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands

NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION

Tel. (670) 234-6866/234-9447/234-7689/234-7670 - Fax. (670) 234-9021
Email: nmhc@nmhc.gov.mp



NOTICE OF FUNDING AVAILABILITY OF COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT FUNDS FOR PROGRAM YEAR 2015

THIS ADVERTISEMENT IS PAID FOR BY NMHC WITH CPD FUNDS.

The Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, through the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) is announcing the availability of an estimated \$1,240,460.00 in Community Planning and Development (CPD) funds available from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. NMHC anticipates receiving an estimated amount of \$868,915.00 in Community Development Block Grants (CDBG); \$309,294.00 in Home Investment Partnerships (HOME); and, \$62,251.00 in Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) funds for Program Year (PY) 2015.

The CDBG funds, authorized under Title I of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, may be used for a wide range of community development activities to revitalize neighborhoods, provide affordable housing, expand economic opportunities, and improve community facilities and services. However, use of these funds must meet at least one of the national objectives which include: 1) to benefit low and moderate-income families; 2) to eliminate slum or blight conditions; or 3) to meet other urgent community development needs.

The CDBG program requires a grant recipient to certify that it will minimize displacement of persons as a result of activities assisted with CDBG funds. The CNMI government does not plan on undertaking any activity which will cause displacement of person. In the event of any unforeseen displacement resulting from any CDBG funded activity, the CNMI government will comply with the requirements of the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, its implementing regulation and applicable local law.

HOME funds may be used to create affordable housing through financing assistance, site acquisition or improvement, and rehabilitating existing residential dwellings as well as providing funds for new construction or purchase of a single family residential dwelling. Use of HOME funds must benefit low-income families.

ESG funds may be used to rehabilitate or convert to buildings into homeless shelters and for shelter operating expenses, supportive services and homeless prevention and rapid re-housing activities. Use of ESG funds must benefit the homeless.

Applications for the use of CPD funds are available for pick up at the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) located in Garapan, Saipan; San Jose Village, Tinian; and, Songsong Village, Rota, beginning January 06, 2015.

Applications must be submitted to the NMHC Offices in Garapan, Saipan (Saipan Residents); San Jose, Tinian (Tinian Residents); and, Songsong Village, Rota (Rota Residents) by Friday, March 23, 2015, no later than 4:30 p.m. Applications submitted after March 23, 2015, will not be accepted.

A briefing will be conducted for interested applicants and for those applicants who have picked up an application for the use of CPD funds. The briefing will address the program requirements and regulations concerning the usage of CPD funds.

The schedules for briefing are as follows: February 18, 2015, 5:00 p.m. & February 25, 2015, 5:00 p.m.

We are encouraging all non-profit, for profit, and government service providers who are providing services to people with disabilities, homeless individuals, and emergency shelter administrators and operators to attend this briefing.

For residents living on the island of Saipan, the briefing will held at the NMHC Office in Garapan; Residents living on the island of Tinian, the briefing will be held at the NMHC Office in San Jose Village; and Residents living on the island of Rota, the briefing will be held at the NMHC Office in Songsong Village.

Accommodations for disabled individuals or other non-English speaking individuals who wish to attend the briefing are available upon request by giving at least 24 hours notice prior to the meeting so that such needs can be arranged and provided. Additional inquiries, concerning the CPD program, may be directed to Ms. Zenie P. Mafnas, Deputy Corporate Director or Mr. Jacob Muna, Planning Assistant at 234-6866 or 234-7689.

/s/ Jesse S. Palacios
Corporate Director

CDA commercial loan program picks up steam

The CNMI State Small Business Credit Initiative is "picking up steam and rolling." The program has now crossed over 20 percent commitment of the initial disbursement from U.S. Treasury toward eight loans in the CNMI. Those eight loans represent over \$1.5 million in total loan amounts, with an average of \$196,000 per loan. Seven of the loans are from Saipan businesses and one of the loans was for a Rota-based business.

The eight loans represent just

over \$700,000 of SSBCI commitment. This number is 20 percent of the goal to reach 80 percent commitment of the initial disbursement. Even though the program has increased enrolled loans, it still anticipates committing another \$2.7 million of SSBCI funds by June 2015 to be eligible for the remaining allocated SSBCI funds from U.S. Treasury.

To assist in reaching the 80-percent commitment goal, the CNMI was recently ap-

proved by U.S. Treasury for a program modification. More specifically, Michigan Economic Development Corp. as the third party underwriter will no longer be required to enroll loans in the program. This modification provides a much more streamlined process for speeding up loan commitments. The participating banks and borrowers will benefit from the modification by allowing the Commonwealth Development Authority to manage the en-

tire process from receiving the banks' intake form to disbursement. The loan review process, which includes program eligibility and reviewing the banks underwriting, will now take place internally at CDA.

CDA will only be reviewing the application; ultimate approval will come from the Independent Loan Review Committee.

"Gov. [Eloy S.] Inos had advised that he wanted the federal funds to be deployed expeditiously to support the

private sector to further boost the economy. We have worked closely with CDA's executive director [Manuel] Sablan and the Department of Finance's Secretary [Larrissa] Larson to implement these streamlining measures. I appreciate all the efforts put in for this purpose. I encourage entrepreneurs, existing business owners, and others to take advantage of this program. Talk to your bank about the SSBCI program," said acting Commerce secre-

tary Mark O. Rabauliman.

With the recent program modification, the CNMI SSBCI Program is picking up steam and fully positioned to support additional commercial loans. For questions regarding program implementation, contact Oscar Camacho, Loan Manager with CDA at 670-234-6245 Ext. 308, or visit our website, www.DevelopCNMI.com. For a complete list of requirements, contact the Commonwealth Development Authority. (CDA)

Landowners sue over Guam airport property

HAGATNA, Guam (AP)—Ancestral landowners of property being used by the Guam International Airport are suing the government.

Pacific Daily News reports the class-action lawsuit filed Friday seeks compensation for lands used by the government-run airport.

Guam law created the Ancestral Lands Commission, which returns excess federal property to its original owners or their heirs.

But the nearly 1,000 acres of property in question is still being used for the runway, terminal and other airport facilities.

The lawsuit is asking that ancestral landowners be given an opportunity to recover their land or its full value.

The lawsuit says the airport property is worth \$51 million.

The Guam attorney general's office didn't immediately respond to a request for comment from the Associated Press Tuesday.

Water outage in Koblerville, Tottotville, As Gonno today

The Commonwealth Utilities Corp. would like to inform residents of Koblerville, Tottotville, and As Gonno that an eight-hour water outage is scheduled for today, Jan. 21, 2015, from 9am to 5pm.

The purpose of this water outage is to allow CUC wa-

ter operations to divert water from the existing Koblerville Wells to the Isley Reservoir. In order to achieve this, CUC must isolate certain sections in the Koblerville water system and this will cause the temporary water outage in the affected villages. The di-

version of the water into the Isley Reservoir will eliminate direct feed wells from the system. Customers will see changes in service pressure as the distribution system will change from dead-headed pumps to the gravity pressure from the Dandan Reservoir.

The dates are as follows:

- KHS Café: Feb. 7, March 7, and April 14
- Tanapag Head Start Center: Jan. 31, Feb. 21, March 21, and April 18

Finale will be on May 2 and

it will be a carnival theme with entertainment from our very own KHS students.

Parents that come along with their child will receive three raffle tickets for the drawing at the end of the school year and

Reservoir.

CUC's operations team will be working hard to return service to our customers in these affected areas as soon as possible. Because the work to be performed will be in traveled roadways, CUC requests that motorists exercise caution when driving through the area. (CUC)

10 tickets for use at the carnival.

Students will receive a raffle ticket for the school's own drawing and 10 tickets for the carnival.

For more information, call KHS main office at 237-3840/34. (PR)

KHS sets Partners in Print schedule

Kagman High School's Partners in Print is starting this month. All students of KHS and their parents are welcome to attend.

This year the school will be

having four sessions for parents in the Kagman, Capital Hill, and San Vicente areas and four sessions for parents in Tanapag, San Roque, and As Matius areas.

Registration and setup begins at 3:30pm on March 27, 2015. Judging will begin promptly at 9am on March 28, 2015 with an open house and awards ceremony in that same afternoon. (PR)

Air Force training at Farallon de Medinilla

ASAN, Guam—The U.S. Air Force will conduct training at the island of Farallon de Medinilla during the following times:

- Jan. 21 – 22, from 10am to 4pm and 5pm to 11:55pm

The general public—especially fishermen, commercial pilots, and marine tour operators—are advised

- Jan. 23, from 7am to 2pm

The Saipan Chamber of Com-

merce will have no general membership meeting this month. Instead it will celebrate with its Installation Dinner on Jan. 24 at the Hibiscus Hall of the Fiesta Resort and Spa Saipan. The Chamber will wel-

come its newest board members and will announce its 2014 Business Person of the Year. A silent auction will offer fabulous prizes! Tickets are \$50/person, and tables of eight persons are available. (SCC)

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High surf seen to subside tonight

A north swell behind a shear line dropping southward over Tinian and Saipan will produce hazardous surf along north facing reefs until this afternoon, Wednesday.

A high surf advisory is in effect until 6pm today along north facing reefs.

According to the CNMI Homeland Security and Emergency Management, a shear line will remain in the vicinity of Saipan through Wednesday night before gradually lifting to the north Thursday. Scattered showers are expected to develop overnight over Saipan and Tinian waters with a slight chance of thunderstorms south of the shear line. Gentle winds over Guam and Rota waters will become moderate Wednesday. Combined seas of 7 to 9 feet will persist through Wednesday night.

The public is being advised to avoid venturing near exposed reefs and beaches, especially those facing north as rip currents will be life threatening. (HSEM)

BIRTHDAY SHOUTOUTS



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Birthday shoutout to our favorite person, John O. Delos Reyes! Wishing you many more wonderful birthdays to come! With lots of love, Julie and your girls.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Happy first birthday to our little Minnie Mouse, Judee-Lei Lizama! We love you so much! From mommy, daddy and big sissy, Ofing.

LT. GOV SIGNS HIS FIRST PROCLAMATION Jan 25 to 31 is Catholic Schools Week

By THOMAS MANGLONA II
CORRESPONDENT

Lt. Gov. Ralph Deleon Guerrero Torres signed his first proclamation yesterday, designating Jan. 25 to 31 as Catholic Schools Week in the Diocese of Chalan Kanoa.

"I urge the faithful of the diocese to participate in observance of this week in appropriate ways that will help instill an awareness and appreciation of the values that Catholic education cultivates in our children, which enhance the quality of life for all our people," Torres told students, teachers, and administrators after signing the proclamation.

Mount Carmel School president Galvin Deleon Guerrero told *Saipan Tribune* that Catholic Schools Week is the "busiest week of the year" for the school as students will be participating in a myriad of activities.

On Sunday, a Mass hosted by Mount Carmel School students will kick off the celebration, followed by community service activities on Monday, and hon-

oring the school's Teacher of the Year on Tuesday. The sole Catholic educational institution on Saipan will also honor servicemen as well as name the Distinguished AlumKnight of the Year at the annual "Night with the Knights" event at the end of next week.

Guerrero explained the impor-

tance of the week for Catholic schools and said that the school aims to educate the whole child to see with Christ's eyes.

"We want to help students develop as well-rounded people that are not just academically good but also socially, spiritually, personally, and morally [good]," he added.

Eskuelan San Francisco de Borja on Rota and the Sister Remedios Early Childhood Development Center will also join MCS in the celebration.

Sister Remedios principal and MCS alumna Bernardita Seman said the school is honored to participate in the weeklong celebration. "We have been always

supportive of Catholic education and are excited to take part again," she added.

Catholic Schools Week was started by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops as a national celebration. The theme for the event this year is "Catholic Schools: Communities of Faith, Knowledge and Service."



THOMAS A. MANGLONA II
School principal Galvin Deleon Guerrero, Lt. Gov. Ralph Torres, and Apostolic Administrator for the Diocese of Chalan Kanoa Fr. Ryan Jimenez pose for a photo flanked by Mt. Carmel School and Sister Remedios students.

THOMAS A. MANGLONA II ►
Fr. Ryan Jimenez, left, smiles as Lt. Gov. Ralph Torres, right, signs the Catholic Schools Week proclamation, proclaiming Jan. 25 to 31 as Catholic School's Week.

Flashback A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

January 21, 2010

'Explore thermal energy on Pagan Island'

The chairman of the Commonwealth Retirees Association, Juan M. Sablan, is urging the U.S. military to explore thermal energy on Pagan Island for its energy requirements when it relocates troops to Guam. There are about 8,600 Marines and about 9,000 of their dependents that will be transferred from Okinawa, Japan, to Guam starting in 2012. Because Guam cannot accommodate all training for the relocating Marines, the military looks at Tinian to provide opportunities for training groups. Tinian is only about 100 miles or 160 km away from Guam and two-thirds of its land is leased to the U.S. Department of Defense.

3 in human smuggling case plead guilty, get probation

The federal court imposed yesterday a one-year probation sentence on three Chinese nationals who were charged with attempting to unlawfully enter Guam through a boat. Junhua Chen, Jian Dong, and Ping Liu were part of a group of 24 Chinese nationals who allegedly tried to enter Guam on Jan. 5, 2010. U.S. District Court for the NMI designated judge David Wiseman ordered that the three be turned over to a federal immigration official immedi-

ately for deportation. The judge said if immediate deportation fails and defendants are released pending further immigration proceedings, they were directed to immediately report to the U.S. Probation Office to begin their probation terms.

January 21, 2007

Lizama dismisses many claims in Hafadai Hotel dispute

The Superior Court has dismissed many claims pertaining to a legal dispute among the owners of Hafadai Beach Hotel in Garapan. Associate judge Juan T. Lizama ruled that Pacific Development, Inc. shareholders do not have standing to sue PDI for breach of fiduciary duty, dilution, accounting, or injunctive relief. Lizama granted PDI's motion to dismiss the PDI shareholders from plaintiffs' Guerrero Family Trust and others' claims of fiduciary duty, dilution, accounting, and injunctive relief. The Guerrero Family and others are the minority shareholders in two corporations—Saipan Hotel Corp. (SHC) and its parent PDI. SHC operates Hafadai Hotel.

Ex-Rep. Demapan gets probation sentence for taking endangered birds

The federal court has imposed a one-year probation sentence on former Representative Ignacio DLG. Demapan for taking endangered birds. U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Alex R. Munson also ordered Demapan to write a 10-page double spaced type written report on the importance of protecting an endangered species. Munson said Demapan should present the report to three school classrooms. The judge required the defendant to perform 100 hours of community work service and pay a \$25 court assess-

ment fee. In April 2006, special agents from the Division of Fish and Wildlife arrested Demapan for taking endangered birds.

January 21, 2005

Dentist allegedly assaults businessman

A businessman sued a dentist for punching him over an altercation at a Saipan restaurant, asking the Superior Court for an award of monetary damages. James B. Matsumoto, who owns a financing company, yesterday filed with the court a civil action against Dr. John Ronan, part owner of Toothworks. Based on the complaint filed by Matsumoto's lawyer, Joseph A. Arriola, he went to the AJ's Restaurant on a Friday night last November to meet with another man regarding some business matters. At the restaurant's bar, Matsumoto struck up a conversation with a man whose friends included Ronan. Matsumoto proceeded to introduce himself to the group. Matsumoto had a conversation about a proposed business partnership between the financing company and the dental clinic.

Man fined \$500 for threatening couple

The U.S. District Court yesterday placed a man on three years of probation and fined him \$500 for threatening a couple in a letter. The court had convicted Crisanto T. Balolong of transmitting a threatening letter, an offense that entails a maximum prison term of five years. Balolong pleaded guilty to the charge in a plea agreement with the U.S. Attorney's Office last year, expressing remorse for what he did. Prosecutors charged Balolong for threatening Efren and Filomena Francisco by sending them newspaper cutouts that claimed his alleged membership to the New People's Army, a communist guerilla group in the Philippines.

3 from CNMI attend Republican National Committee meeting

SAN DIEGO—For the first time in many years, the CNMI Republican Party had all three Republican National Committee members attend a Republican National Committee quarterly meeting. Chairman/president James Ada, National Committeeman Bo Palacios, and National Committeewoman Virginia “Vicky” Villagomez were in full force for this important meeting.

This past week, the Republican National Committee convened in San Diego. The primary purpose of this meeting was to elect officers for the coming year. Chairman Reince Priebus, co-chair Sharon Day, and treasurer Tony Parker were all re-elected. Incoming secretary Susie Hudson was the only newcomer.

Ada presented a report on the 2014 elections to the RNC

Western Region Friday morning. In his report, Ada highlighted the Republican victories in the Senate and House as well as the governor’s race. Ada stated, “The Republican Party is very strong in our Commonwealth and we look forward to working with the RNC to make it even stronger!”

Villagomez was one of the RNC members that seconded the re-election of RNC co-chair



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

From left, National Committeeman Bo Palacios, National Committeewoman Vicky Villagomez, and CNMI Republican Party chairman/president James Ada attend the Republican National Committee quarterly meeting in San Diego.

Day. Speaking in front of the entire Republican National Committee membership, and with several national media outlets covering the proceedings live, Villagomez said, “As the National Committeewoman from the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, I am proud to support and second the nomination of the Sharon Day for RNC co-chair!”

Palacios also addressed the RNC membership to lead a round of applause for the newly elected Republican Congresswoman from America Samoa, Amata Radewagen.

The CNMI delegation was featured front and center throughout the RNC meetings. Day and Priebus both met personally with the delegation several times and reinforced

how much they appreciate the participation of the CNMI in the RNC. The delegation met with potential 2016 Republican presidential candidates Mitt Romney, Rick Perry, and Scott Walker.

“Every four years the territories are feted by Republican presidential campaigns. In the coming weeks we are going to reach out to the other territories to identify ways we can play a more important role in the nomination process.” Palacios stated.

Other highlights from the meeting include:

■ 2012 Republican presidential nominee and former Massachusetts governor Mitt

Romney told Villagomez how much his son Matt Romney still talks about his trip to Saipan on behalf of his father’s campaign.

■ Texas governor and potential 2016 Republican presidential candidate told the CNMI delegation of his trip to Saipan a few years ago and stated he hoped to get back there soon.

■ On the final night, the CNMI delegation joined a few hundred of their closest RNC friends for dinner and dancing aboard the USS Midway. It was here that they were seated in front of Romney as he gave his speech to the crowd.

■ A local San Diego TV station interviewed Villagomez after Romney’s speech. (GOP)

Marianas Medical Center

Marianas Medical Center would like to inform the general public that effective January 1, 2015, we are now accepting Medicaid Insurance for both children and adults.

CLINIC HOURS:
Monday-Friday 8:00am-5:00pm
Saturday 9:00am-1:00pm

To make an appointment, please call us at 234-3925-28/30.

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

MVA-RFP-15-2320

For: MARPI MAINTENANCE SERVICE

Closing Date: **January 23, 2015** Time: 3:00 p.m.

Submit sealed proposals to: Marianas Visitors Authority P.O. Box 500861 CK, Saipan, MP 96950

Interested parties may pick up the scope of work at the **Marianas Visitors Authority** office between 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., (closed 12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.) Monday to Friday, except holidays or by visiting the **MVA** website at www.mymarianas.com.

/s/ Marian Aldan-Pierce MVA Chair, Board of Directors

/s/ PERRY P. TENORIO Managing Director

RESIDENTIAL, GOVERNMENT & BUSINESS DISCONNECTION NOTICE

IT&E would like to remind its **RESIDENTIAL, GOVERNMENT & BUSINESS** customers that current billing of accounts are due on or before **Wednesday, January 21**. Payments not received by close of business on **January 21** will result in temporary suspension of all telephone services after 6:00PM on that day.

To prevent temporary suspension, customers are hereby advised to kindly pay their bills on or before **Wednesday, January 21**. Disputed billings must be brought to IT&E's attention in person or in writing by **Wednesday, January 21**. Customers must pay any current amount due, to avoid disconnection.

If you have questions regarding billing or services please call Customer Service at 682-4ITE (4483) or visit our Customer Service or Business Sales Center – Middle Road, Chalan Laolao.

To avoid disconnection you may pay your IT&E bill at any location below:

SHELL Service Stations – up to 4:00pm

Chalan Laolau – up to 5:00pm

Tinian/Rota Office - up to 4:30pm

TSL Plaza – up to 6:00pm

Online payment – up to 9:00pm

PAY BY PHONE - 682-4ITE (4483)



DATED this 07th day of January, 2015.
/s/ Robert T. Torres, Auctioneer

This job announcement will remain open until filled. Also, this job announcement can be seen and a printable copy of the application downloaded at <http://www.justice.gov.mp>.

THE CNMI JUDICIARY IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY PROVIDER AND EMPLOYER.

Opinion

Saipan Tribune

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EDITORIAL

Congress already off to a bad start on immigration

In an expected, though disappointing, vote last week, conservative Republicans in the U.S. House undermined President Barack Obama's efforts to act on the nation's broken immigration system.

The House passed a \$40 billion funding package for the Department of Homeland Security, but that package contained amendments that would defund the president's executive orders delaying the deportation of millions of immigrants who are in the U.S. illegally. He acted because Congress wouldn't. Those representatives who voted for this bill should finally come up with their own credible plan.

The exercise is political theater because the amendments within the House bill are unlikely to pass in the U.S. Senate, where Democrats are likely to stage a filibuster. President Obama also threatens a veto.

U.S. Rep. Dave Reichert, a Washington state Republican, was one of only 26 Republicans willing to join with Democrats to vote against one of the amendments to freeze the Obama administration's 2012 program allowing some immigrants who entered the U.S. as children to stay. Disappointingly, Reichert voted to dismantle Obama's executive action last November allowing those in the country illegally for at least five years to apply for work permits.

Before Obama's orders, the administration deported record numbers of immigrants, breaking up families in the process.

Oddly, U.S. House Speaker John Boehner claimed that undoing the president's actions is not about deporting immigrants, but about punishing executive overreach. The actual intention could affect an estimated 5 million adults and children.

Meanwhile, House Republican leadership offers no viable alternatives to tackle the real issue: 11 million immigrants illegally living in the U.S. and contributing to the economy.

For nearly two years, the House has ignored a bipartisan Senate agreement that provides comprehensive immigration reform. That bill includes a lengthy, challenging path to citizenship for those individuals who wish to come out of hiding, play by the rules and become productive members of society.

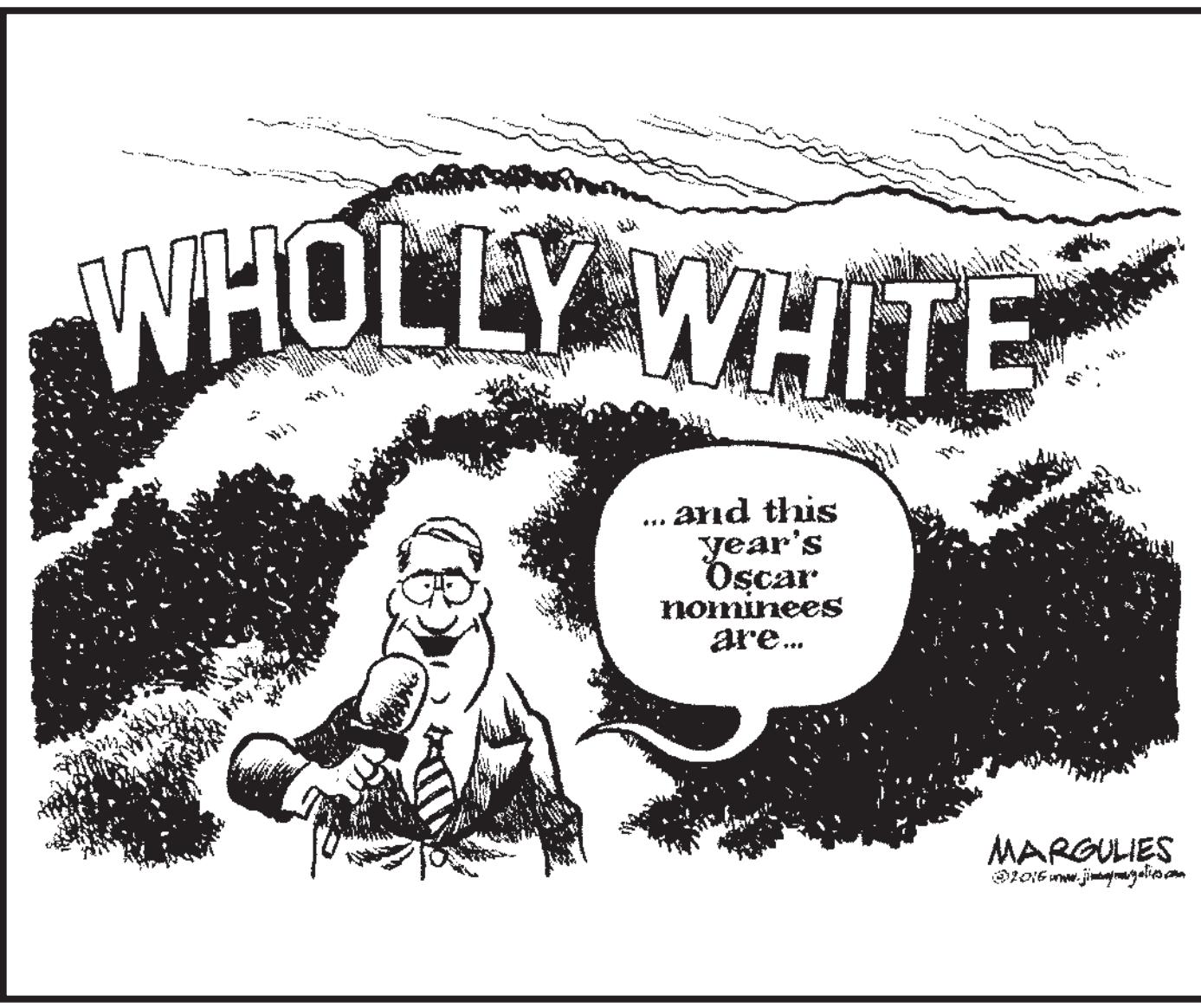
When Congress refused to act, Obama did. Now Boehner and others call him "reckless." That's empty criticism from a caucus that not only refuses to fix a broken immigration system, but also tries to score political points by putting important legislation at risk unless it gets its way.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell promised that Republican control would lead to a functioning, cooperative government.

Two weeks in, Congress is off to a bad start.

Republican leaders should end this obsession with fighting the president.

(c)2015 The Seattle Times



China-US relations

Delighted to have the bivalve muzzle residue-named Yang in this page with her reflections on *Treating a Rising China*. Whether she had a simplistic view, or just provided a holding image for those who would not be bothered by the complexity of the situation, is really beside the point. If one has either a corrective or an expansive view on the subject, it is our obligation to spell it out so.

Here go I. She begins with the Chinese saying that "one mountain cannot sustain two tigers," a truism smart tigers know to inhabit their own mountains, and there are enough mountains to live on. No two tigers would keep stalking each other just so their power would be sovereign.

I even called the last President Hu Jintao a tiger, though the "Hu" in his name is of the second tone, while "hu" of the animal tiger is a third tone. But Hu Jintao did not act like a tiger, and PM Wen Jiabao often ascended into prominence exceeding that of Hu Jintao. So whether the tiger in the mountain is used literally or metaphorically, the last leadership make-up of China was hardly tiger-some!

Also, I read Ms. Yang as educated in the Euro-American schools of thought that are comfortable with the metaphor of "King." After all, school foundation days still select homecoming queens and kings; the reigning sovereign monarch of the British Commonwealth of 53 nations among 195 sovereign countries is a Queen, a throne to more than a fourth of the nations of the world acknowledged by local royalties!

A child of England but not within the Commonwealth, the U.S. historically is not too enamored with royalty (George Washington refused to be called King George) save the beauties in the gridiron, and pretentious families in the Atlantic northeast, so to use "king" in reference to the United States is misplaced, at best.

More so if applied to China as a competitor. Yes, we usually translate "Huangdi," the head of a dynasty, as "king" or "emperor" but that is more of a Western bias in reference to pyramidal structure of Euro-royalty than an accurate reflection of the role and function of the head of China's dynasties. Confucian harmony utilizes the image of the family as its organizing principle, and "huangdi" is the magnificent father (*huang die*) or glorious brother (*huang didi*). Save the mythological King Arthur, the kingship tradition in the West does not bode well as a civic model!

"China" in reference to the land of Sun Yat Sen is a foreign word. The Silk Road of the Han got the Persians to refer to the traders as people of the Qin, picked up as Sina by Rome, became Chine to the French post-Marco Polo, and China to the English when the sovereign started strutting the Union Jack across the ocean lanes to Xiang Gang that they renamed Victoria, and later, Canton's Hong Kong.

By JAIME VERGARA

Special to the Saipan Tribune

Jaime Vergara previously taught at SVES in the CNMI. A peripatetic pedagogue, he last taught in China but makes Honolulu, Shenyang, and Saipan home. He can be reached at pinoypanda2031@aol.com.



Instead, the folks with the Qin and the Han, totaling 56 ethnic groups since 1949, call themselves *Zhongguo*, "the middle realm," befitting the ones who claim a mandate of heaven, the source of the precious water that produces the agricultural yields in the fields; also, pointing to the tranquility and equanimity that comes from straddling the serenity of the pivot point of the *yin-yang* around which life's contradictions revolve. The rivers of Chiang Jiang and the Huanghe defined the waters that made China!

"China has the ability to threaten the status of the U.S." is an American perspective. In the current China Dream, the third point is on trade relations as always a win-win situation. My African and southwest Asian students describe how their first contact with a Chinese in their homeland is that of one seeking a partner that they can nurture to grow an enterprise together. Occidentals hone their skills to compete; Orientals harmonize within communal relations. This last statement is general; its truth is not universally factual at the ground level. It is, however, inaccurate to ascribe to China the label "competitor," one feared as having the "ability to threaten the status of the U.S." when all it wants is engage in fair trade.

To the image of a "Rising China," we note that of all the civilizations in the world, China has the longest continuous civilization on the planet. The dynastic rule from the Qin to the Qing resulted in a radical transformation that created a nationalist ethos (*Kuomintang*) and a communal socialism (*Gongchangdang*), currently represented by Taiwan, Xianggang and Aomen on one side, and the rest of China save the Uighurs of Xinjiang on the other.

I am of Sino-Malayo-Polynesian DNA, but Euro-American memes, a citizen in a nation that keeps planting discord into the Sino-psyché, but I see *Zhongguo* stick to a policy of harmony and cooperation in development, incorporating new vision into old forms, and providing stability from history to support the nascent and often nebulous new. With a history of five millennia, characterizing the effort as "rising" is a bit nearsighted.

Still, Opinion page articles are meant to start conversations, and in this regard, Pearl Yang did us a favor.

EDITORIAL POLICY

Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Fiddling with empty spouts

Whenever we slam out filthy foot into our mouth, we scream it's bloody time we secure our rights to self-government. We do it with pomposity wrapped in ignorance and disorientation.

Unfortunately, it's a worn-out trick now crawling lamely near trash bins all over. Perhaps it's better that we measure our filthy foot to see if it still fits our big mouth, the latter usually done without engaging the brain. Humiliating, huh?

Somehow we keep nursing the folly that someone would come around to clean up after our mess. Nah! A full-blown bankruptcy looms ahead. Let's see indigenous spout about self-government. Let's see your mantle dealing with it. Self-government begins with the self by owning up to our responsibilities first and foremost.

Another sleepwalk in grand *mañana*? Eh, without a plan and emplacement of basic infrastructure for billions of investment waiting for soft landing somewhere, there's nothing up that alley other than an air bridge that should be included in the *Guinness Book of World Records*.

But I remain guardedly hopeful only if we deal resolutely with the challenges before us. Anyway, let's digress to something we could smile about, if not, ponder with nostalgia.

Stampu!

Admirable the courage and efforts of our elderly learning English after the dust of World War II settled down. It was quite a transition from Japanese to English, you know, "John-san" to "John, sir!"

The Japanese era turned into nostalgic discussions when most everything grown, caught or manufactured here before WWII was sold to feed the larger population in Japan. No more! A sentimental "sayonara" is what's left while welcoming, in its place, "food stampu—stamps!"

■ ■ ■

Heck plant: Today we produce far less than pre-WWII level that

instantly turns into excess so we feed Me, Myself and I and our extended family, the pigs. We simply refused an organized "diversified farming" method to ensure produce are available all year round. Thus, the flood of eggplants, cucumber, and other produce everywhere most harvest season.

Perhaps this explains why there's no constructive policy on farming and fishing: Stubborn inability to see the forest for the trees! It's an anomaly that remains stagnant or fossilized in some fear of sort. It's mired in the scarcity mentality. With flood of certain produce, an aunt said, "John, too much heck plant (eggplant) and kakalamba (cucumber)".

■ ■ ■

Raisu: The old folks pulled out of the olden Japanese era into Americana but came away with what has been and still is staple food—raisu (rye-soo) or rice. It's no longer the one harvested in marshlands here but in 50-lb sacks all the way from California (CalRose).

Unfortunately, raisu and relaksu (relaxation) or couch potato culture has led the indigenous population down the pathway to Type II diabetes. Hmmm! We've made progress from "raisu" to "daialisu"—dialysis. Over three hundred of our own go through the system weekly, an alarming number.

■ ■ ■

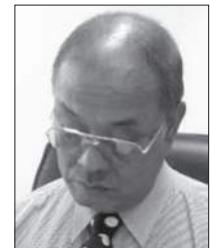
Stagnancy: The near-generational stagnant salaries and wages here started turning into permanent fixture in our living room. In fact, it has been fossilized into a broken record of "stagnancy, stagnancy, stagnancy."

The deepening mess started nearly 20 years ago when the feds took over immigration. It instantly shut down the \$2.1 billion apparel industry that left the local economy crippled to this day. Coupled with local negligence, what's there to expect other than disorientation?

By JOHN DELROSARIO

Special to the Saipan Tribune

John DelRosario Jr. is a former publisher of the Saipan Tribune and a former secretary of the Department of Public Lands.



It simply means we must retreat and reassess what the feds did and what it is that we've failed on our side of the Pacific Divide. Unless this is fully understood with clarity, including real time protocol, ours is the constant crash found in our yearly experience with the fickle tourism industry.

It's not hard discerning that the tourism industry is at the mercy of events in Japan and Asia, e.g., the subsequent slowdown of the global economy triggered by huge drop in the price of crude oil. The lack of anchor investment places our livelihood constantly on the edge of economic nihilism.

It's fine to declare the economy has started improving in expected rosy inaugural prose. But the real test is in the take-home pay of employees. Has there been marked improvement? If not, then the assertion is one of colossal idle talk you can't take to the bank. Do we slide into the usual inertia of *mañana* once more?

Macau diversification

China's President Xi Jinping has started purging corruption in Macau, freezing funds for mainland high rollers and arresting the head of the largest prostitution ring last week. It also ordered Macau to begin economic diversification beyond casino.

The triad's junket tour is basically history and all the glitz and glamour of casino are headed into the sunset. Take a critical look at the implications of the latest mandate from President Xi.

keeping some help us in our future economic development?
Peace to all. Hope you have better ideas to help.

Winnie Atalig
San Jose, Tinian

LITERARY NOOK

Kim, 'the Young un'

By JOEY 'PEPE' BATBON' CONNOLY
SPECIAL TO THE SAIPAN TRIBUNE

A series of senryu on Kim Jong-un

millions for stars
North Korea 'Interviewed'
Hollywood ascendant
Kim 'youngun' young gun'
a North Korean nightmare
Interviewed LIVE

'My Dead Uncle'
'Family Food for Fish'
new N. Korean action films

plenty Kims
very little kim chi
North Korea starves
Kim Chi buffet hit
'Kim Supreme' a loss leader
experience not vital

borders tight and brains light
lack of nutrition cited
children's growth blighted

big marching army
plenty prison camps
little hope goose steps
Kim the 'young un'
shaves the sides of his head
constant short circuits

Supreme Commander of
Pyongyang Puppet Playground
parades himself

Kim now thirty two (b. Jan 8, 1983)
dark days for the DPRK
not through

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Random thoughts on Tinian issues

The Tinian Dynasty Hotel and Casino labor issue is something the people of Tinian seriously need to address. Otherwise we will be looking at a major layoff in our government too, because most of the revenue generated from this industry contributes to local government employees' salaries.

The Tinian Dynasty Hotel and Casino provides a major role in the development of the workforce by providing training and education unavailable at present for unemployed individuals on Tinian. It also contributes the highest amount of revenue for the people of Tinian.

USCIS' issues with the CW non-renewal will affect the economy of our island. The previous administration was informed to develop the workforce before last year but up until now it is not yet completed.

The people of Tinian gravely needs education and training support from an accredited institution in order for the island's workforce to be able to provide the needed U.S.-qualified workers needed for this casino industry—the only industry that provides most of the jobs for unemployed individuals on Tinian and for some Saipan residents looking for jobs on Tinian. This industry is the only one that provides the largest amount of money and job opportunities for the people of Tinian.

At present I observe the need to improve communication between the Labor Department and the Tinian Dynasty human resources management. In past years, employers were mandated to hire and train the local workforce but there has been no support from our government to improve the quality of the workforce development. Put yourself in the employer's position. If they tell you to hire and train local workers, what are the benefits that you will get from this? What are the losses that will affect your business? Yes, you will have more local labor but the only problem is, what if these trained individuals quit and go work for the government or mainland and Guam? Would that be a loss for you?

The picture now is most employers have lost interest in training locals who are not qualified for the job because it affects the financial part of the business and its operations. After they train an employee, he/she leaves for a higher paying job in the government or the mainland and Guam. At present many local employees work and then quit after not even a year or a month. Yet no one bothers to look into this issue. CW employees are also afraid to train locals because they will lose their jobs. Many of these CW workers have worked here for so long and wish to stay and become residents. Some of these CW say that all they want is a place to live, nothing else. They will work for the CNMI just so long as they are allowed to be part of us. Some say that they are knowledgeable of the citizenship issues, they have no intention of tak-

ing over. They only want to be part of CNMI.

Why not have the Northern Marianas College train the local workers—offer certificate programs and have the Tinian Dynasty pay for their employees' training? In that way there is a guarantee that everyone will benefit because the employee is certified, Dynasty will have trained employees, and the government will generate revenue from employee's tax and the college too will generate revenue to improve the education needs of the CNMI people. And lastly, it will change the behavior of the local employees and CW workers. I mean, with this type of support, everyone is doing their part so no one will be biased against each other.

Let me simplify it. At present CW workers think local workers are lazy and undependable. Local workers think CW workers are protecting their job so that they can bring in more CWs to take over their job. This kind of behavior creates conflicts among employees, employers and the economic workforce development.

I hear many unemployed local individuals want trainings so they can go to work in the career they choose. They said they feel uncomfortable not being able to do anything that they are not trained to do. So if we have our government provide the trainings for the local workers through an accredited institution, I'm sure no one will be offended. The employer will not worry about having a reliable, qualified local workforce and the CW workers will not be insecure of local workers because they are already trained and are ready to work. They will only worry about losing their jobs because of their citizenship.

But since we don't have enough labor, it is an essential issue to look into those CW who have been working here for over 20 years and grant them the citizenship. I think that granting citizenship might help us to address some of this labor issues. Many think of it as they might take over, while the CW think of it as being part of the residents. I am one of the many whose parent have been alienated because of similar issues (my father is Korean and my mother is half Korean and Chamorro). Believe me, even after all the abuse and unprofessional judgment against us, I never thought of myself as alien, but part of this community, with no time to waste on these unprofessional behavior toward us. Instead I study their behavior and practice and help them make a better person of them. For those who has been working here for more than 20 years, I feel the need to give them a chance to prove me wrong that they will not take over but become part of us.

If we let them go, what are the chances that we will be able to be on our own? Many of these are our caregivers, carpenters, farmers, waiters, friends, and some are families. So think of about it. Are we ready to be on our own? Do we really have enough labor? Would

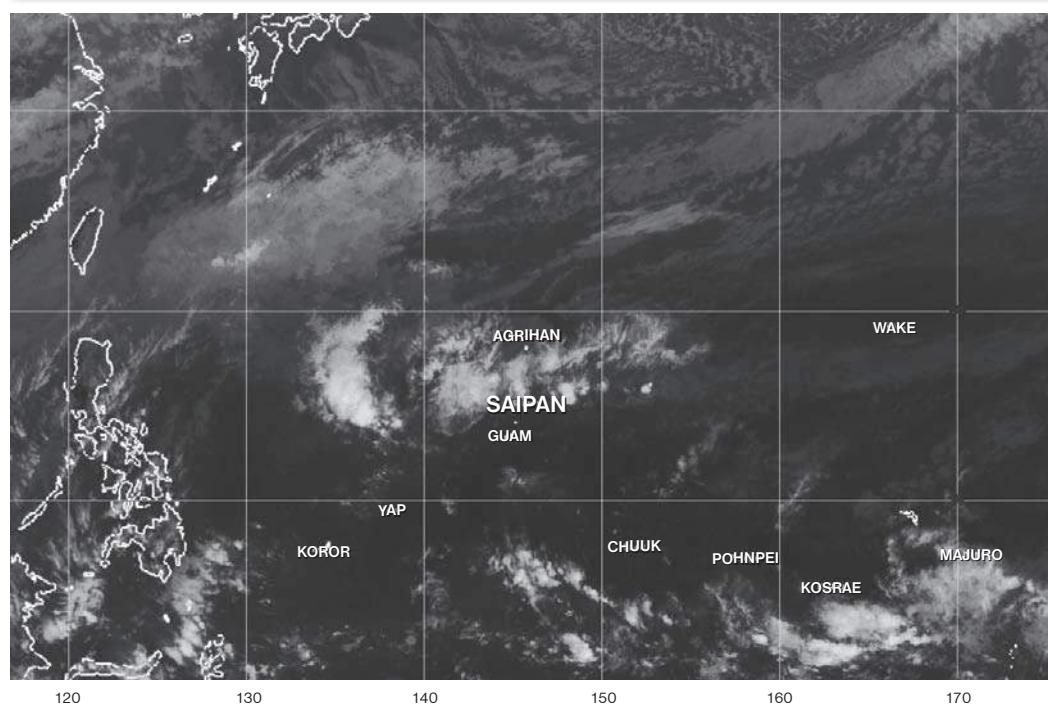
The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
Mostly cloudy with scattered showers. East winds 15 to 20 mph.	Partly sunny with isolated showers. East winds 15 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.

▲ 84°	▼ 77°	▲ 86°	▼ 78°	▲ 88°	▼ 79°	▲ 88°	▼ 79°
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Yesterday's Satellite Image



PICTURE TIME: 1:00PM, TUESDAY, JANUARY 20, 2015

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A cold front cuts southwestward from 25N145E to beyond 22N130E. Cloudiness and scattered showers are along and up to 200 miles northwest of this front. Another cold front runs southwestward from 20N180E to south of Wake Island at 16N167E and continues westward as a shear line across Saipan at 15N146E to near 13N140E recurring northwestward to beyond 17N130E. Low clouds and scattered showers are along and up to 150 miles north of the boundary east of Saipan at 15N146E. Scattered showers and a few thunderstorms over the Marianas and well north of Yap state are along and up to 200 miles north of the boundary west of Saipan. A near equatorial trough is generating scattered showers and a few thunderstorms south of Chuuk, Pohnpei and Kosrae between 4N and 2N from 150E to 168E. A trade-wind disturbance is causing scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms over the southern Marshall Islands between 6N and 3N from 168E to beyond the date line.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

Micronesia

Guam And Rota	Thundershowers	▲ 85	▼ 77
Palau	Thunderstorms	▲ 85	▼ 77
Yap	Thunderstorms	▲ 84	▼ 77
Chuuk	Partly Cloudy	▲ 85	▼ 80
Pohnpei	Partly Cloudy	▲ 86	▼ 78
Kosrae	Partly Cloudy	▲ 83	▼ 80
Majuro	Shower	▲ 83	▼ 79

Around the Globe

Auckland	Partly Cloudy	▲ 81	▼ 60
Beijing	Sunny	▲ 46	▼ 20
Hong Kong	Sunny	▲ 72	▼ 55
Honolulu	Sunny	▲ 83	▼ 68
London	Partly Cloudy	▲ 42	▼ 38
Los Angeles	Mostly Cloudy	▲ 73	▼ 51
Manila	Cloudy	▲ 83	▼ 69
Melbourne	Showers	▲ 88	▼ 65
Miami	Cloudy	▲ 75	▼ 66
New York	Partly Cloudy	▲ 42	▼ 26
Osaka	Mostly Cloudy	▲ 54	▼ 45
Paris	Partly Cloudy	▲ 38	▼ 31
Pusan	Cloudy	▲ 53	▼ 37
Rome	Showers	▲ 54	▼ 45
Salem	Fog	▲ 51	▼ 31
San Francisco	Fog	▲ 60	▼ 46
Seoul	Cloudy	▲ 45	▼ 29
Tokyo	Rain	▲ 42	▼ 39
Washington, DC	Partly Cloudy	▲ 51	▼ 36

Tides

2:04 AM	Today	Low Tide:	-0.6 Feet
8:54 AM	Today	High Tide:	2.1 Feet
2:31 PM	Today	Low Tide:	1.0 Feet
7:39 PM	Today	High Tide:	2.1 Feet

Sunrise/Sunset

Today	6:47 AM	6:10 PM
Thursday	6:47 AM	6:11 PM
Friday	6:47 AM	6:11 PM
Saturday	6:47 AM	6:12 PM
Sunday	6:47 AM	6:12 PM

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	6:59 AM	6:56 PM
Thursday	7:53 AM	7:58 PM
Friday	8:45 AM	8:59 PM
Saturday	9:34 AM	9:58 PM
Sunday	10:22 AM	10:56 PM

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NMI CRIME STOPPERS

Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:

- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any IT&E cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.com

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JANUARY 5, 2015

DEPARTURES				ARRIVALS			
SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)				GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN			
UA5070 4:15am 5:05am Daily				UA5069 2:45am 3:35am Daily			
UA5068 8:00am 8:50am 3				UA5071 6:40am 7:30am 3			
UA5068 8:40am 9:30am 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7				UA5071 7:15am 8:05am 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7			
UA5039 2:20pm 4:00pm 6, 7 via Rota				UA5039 1:00pm 1:50pm 6, 7			
UA5078 3:10pm 4:00pm 1, 5				UA5038 1:10pm 2:40pm 2, 4 via Rota			
UA5038 3:10pm 4:00pm 2, 4				UA5077 1:50pm 2:40pm 1, 5			
UA5040 6:55pm 7:45pm 1, 5				UA5041 5:35pm 6:25pm 1, 5			
UA5078 8:35pm 9:25pm 2, 3, 4, 6, 7				UA5077 7:15pm 8:05pm 2, 3, 4, 6, 7			
UA5044 10:40pm 11:30pm 1, 5				UA5043 9:20pm 10:10pm 1, 5			
SAIPAN-ROTA (ROP)				GUAM (GUM)-ROTA (ROP)			
UA5039 2:20pm 2:55pm 6, 7				UA5038 1:00pm 1:35pm 2, 4			
ROTA (ROP)-GUAM (GUM)				ROTA (ROP)-SAIPAN			
UA5039 3:25pm 4:00pm 6, 7				UA5038 2:05pm 2:40pm 2, 4			
SAIPAN-PALAU (ROR)				PALAU (ROR)-SAIPAN			
DL287 6:05am 1:10am+1 2, 6 via NRT				DL298 4:35am 3:00pm 3, 7 via NRT			
SAIPAN-NARITA (NRT)				NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN			
DL287 6:05am 8:40am 1, 2, 4, 5, 6				DL298 10:25am 3:00pm Daily			
DL297 4:20pm 7:05pm Daily				DL288 8:55pm 1:25am+1 1, 3, 4, 5, 7			
SAIPAN-SEOUL (ICN)				SEOUL (ICN)-SAIPAN			

Business

From car lots to city budgets, cheap oil means change

Spending choices that offer most bang for your buck

GETTING STARTED

By CAROLYN BIGDA

Chicago Tribune

Carolyn Bigda writes Getting Started for the Chicago Tribune. yourmoney@tribune.com.



If you're pulling together your budget for 2015 or have made "spend less" one of your New Year's resolutions, consider this tip: Rather than simply cut back on dinners out or trips to the mall, think instead about how to spend more meaningfully.

Jonathan Clements, a columnist for The Wall Street Journal Sunday, makes that point in his book, "Jonathan Clements Money Guide 2015," a road map of sorts for managing your money in the year ahead. He says that to make our dollars really count, we should look back at how we spent our discretionary money in 2014. Then ask the question, were those expenditures satisfying?

If the answer is no, you know where to start tightening your budget.

A good way to get started is to look at a year-end credit card summary, which some banks provide. The summary gives you an overview of how much you spent in certain categories throughout the year, say, transportation and groceries.

You can also sign up for services such as Mint.com, which aggregate online financial accounts and track spending in real time. Mint will also look at past purchases and calculate how much you've spent, on average, in any one area.

Research shows that experiences tend to be more gratifying than possessions, and Clements suspects that will be the case for most people when they think about their purchases in 2014.

"What made you most happy was, probably, going out to dinner with friends or taking a vacation with the family," he said. "It won't be the new refrigerator."

In my case, I got a new refrigerator in late December.

"I still really like it," I said.

"Wait a month," Clements said.

That's because, eventually, things start to lose their luster: A new car will one day need repairs. A new refrigerator gets dirty and cramped. Our memory of experiences, on the other hand, tends to grow fonder over time.

"The broken-down car just sits in the driveway, taunting you," Clements said.

Once you've gotten your priorities set, you can make spending decisions that give you more bang for the buck and free up dollars for other goals, such as paying off debt or building up savings.

Jessica Flaherty, 30, graduated from law school in 2009 with more than \$100,000 in student loan debt. She works in the nonprofit sector in Brunswick, Maine, and isn't making the high salary she expected to earn when she was in school. To chip away at her sizable debt load, she doesn't buy as many new clothes and other items.

But some things were just too important to cut.

"I kept the day-to-day things, like getting coffee," Flaherty said. "I can't make good coffee myself. I've tried, and no one wants to work with me if I haven't been caffeinated."

She also allows herself to go out with co-workers for a sandwich once a week.

"I didn't want to miss that social aspect at work," she said. "That was important to me."

In 2012, Kelsey Folmar decided that she and husband, Kenden, should pay off his remaining \$17,000 in student loan debt. Using Mint.com to scour their finances, she discovered they had spending leaks, including convenience store purchases, which alone averaged \$130 per month.

After plugging those leaks—and renting a room in a family member's home for only \$400 per month for nearly a year—the couple, both 27 and living in Houston, paid off the debt last April. But all the while, they allowed themselves some indulgences.

"We had a budget for going out to eat," Kelsey said. "It's just something my husband and I have always enjoyed. It was the one thing we splurged on."

WASHINGTON (AP)—

Cheap oil doesn't only mean cheaper gas in the tank. It means that a car dealer in Illinois is shuffling the inventory of models he'll be selling, that more students in Wisconsin may get school-provided iPads, that some planned projects in a Southern California city will get delayed, and that some expected oilfield hiring in North Dakota and Texas may not happen.

In ways large and small, plummeting oil prices are now reverberating through businesses, towns, schools and family budgets, causing confusion and changing plans. With prices having fallen by nearly half in just six months, the potential impact has been sudden and wide ranging.

"I'm always chasing my tail," said Ron Hicks, who has sold cars for 10 years in Galesburg, Illinois, and overall for 38 years, and suddenly finds himself with too many smaller fuel-efficient cars on his City Select lot when trucks and sports cars might sell better. "I need to be smarter even than I've been in the past. I need to find the balance."

Fuel is a major cost item for many businesses and local governments, and the recent



AP

In this Jan. 13, 2015 photo, Ford F-150 pickup trucks are lined up at the Lee Sapp Ford dealership in Ashland, Neb.

changes are upending budgets that were drafted month ago and used to plan hiring and authorize projects for 2015. For a medium-sized city with police cars and garbage trucks to fuel, gasoline costs can amount to several hundred thousand dollars annually.

But oil is also a revenue source in more than two dozen

states, especially for about a third of them. In Alaska, where up to 90 percent of the budget is funded by oil, new Gov. Bill Walker has ordered agency heads to start identifying spending cuts.

"This pullback caught most everyone by surprise," Brian M. Youngberg, a senior energy analyst for Edward Jones wrote in analysis last week.

The stakes are especially high for transportation companies. But at Delta Airlines, which now projects \$1.7 billion in fuel savings in 2015, no adjustments are envisioned, at least in ticket prices.

"When it comes lower, hang on to all of it," Delta CEO Richard Anderson told investors in December about likely profits. "That's kind of our philosophy."

Oxfam: Richest 1 percent sees share of global wealth jump

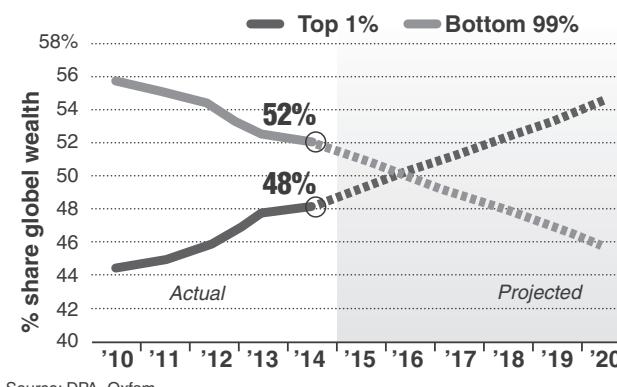
LONDON (AP)—The richest 1 percent of the population will own more than half the world's wealth by 2016, Oxfam International said in a report released as the World Economic Forum

begins in Davos, Switzerland.

Oxfam said the world's richest people saw their share of global wealth jump to 48 percent last year from 44 percent in 2009. Rising inequality is hold-

The rich getting richer

The richest 1 percent of the world's population will soon own more than half of global wealth according to a study from Oxfam.



ing back the fight against global poverty as the world's biggest companies lobby the U.S. and European Union for beneficial tax changes at a time when average taxpayers are still paying the bill for the financial crisis, Oxfam said.

"Do we really want to live in a world where the 1 percent own more than the rest of us combined?" Winnie Byanyima, Oxfam's executive director, said in a statement. "The scale of global inequality is quite simply staggering, and despite the issues shooting up the global agenda, the gap between the richest and the rest is widening fast."

While world leaders such as President Barack Obama and International Monetary Fund chief Christine Lagarde have

talked about tackling extreme economic inequality "we are still waiting for many of them to walk the walk," Byanyima said.

The healthcare and financial services industries spent almost \$900 million to lobby the U.S. government for favorable legislation in 2013, and more than \$200 million was spent on lobbying in the EU, Oxfam said.

At the same time, one in nine people don't have enough to eat and more than a billion people live on less than \$1.25 a day, Oxfam said, ticking off statistics that paint a grim picture for all but the world's richest.

The charity is calling for a crackdown on tax avoidance by corporations and rich people, as well as increased investment in health and education and equal pay legislation.

Davos forum founder urges unity against 'dangerous' risks

DAVOS, Switzerland (AP)—

World leaders must do a better job of coordinating their actions if they want to effectively combat the menace of terrorism and the grave risks from conflicts and volatility around the globe, the founder of the World Economic Forum said Monday.

Speaking on the eve of an annual gathering of the world's financial and political elites in Switzerland's Davos, Klaus Schwab also told The Associated Press that the big risk now is the world moving into a cycle

of deflation.

Worries about the global economy's strength and falling oil prices have weighed down major market indexes since the start of the year. One major concern is whether the recent slump in oil prices will lead to other problems, such as deflation, a downward spiral in prices that could put companies out of business.

Schwab, a Swiss economist,

said international teamwork is necessarily both to generate economic growth and combat terrorism.

"Terror cannot be combatted on a national basis; it needs international cooperation. But also economic growth can only be generated if we coordinate our actions," he said ahead of the summit at the Swiss mountain resort, organized by the WEF.

"I hope the necessary aware-



Schwab

ness to address those issues in a coordinated and decisive way—that this attitude is nourished here," he said.

As the first arrivals among the 2,500 people expected at Davos began to trickle in, Oxfam International said in a report that the richest 1 percent of the population will own more than half the world's wealth by 2016. The share of global wealth among the world's richest people rose to 48 percent last year, up from 44 percent in 2009, according to Oxfam.

Nation

5 goals from Obama's 2014 State of the Union: Yay or Nay?

WASHINGTON (AP)—President Barack Obama used his last State of the Union to declare 2014 a “Year of Action,” and he can claim credit for accomplishing several of the goals he laid out. The smaller ones.

That’s because while he was able to check off most of what he promised to do through executive action in last year’s speech, Obama was unable in the bitterly partisan election year to get Congress to go along with the bigger plans he had for the country that required their approval.

As Obama prepares to make that annual trek up Pennsylvania Avenue to address Congress once again, here’s a look back a year later at five of the promises he made—and which got fulfilled and denied.

■ IMMIGRATION

“Let’s get immigration reform done this year,” Obama declared to a Congress that had long blocked his efforts. And so he did, although it was not the

broad plan he envisioned that would have allowed a path to citizenship for more than 11 million immigrants illegally in the United States. Instead, Obama took executive action to make more than 4 million of those immigrants eligible for protection from deportation and eligible for work permits.

■ MINIMUM WAGE

One of Obama’s most ambitious ideas was to raise America’s minimum wage from \$7.25 to \$10.10 an hour, upping the ante from the \$9-an-hour proposal he made in the 2013 State of the Union. Congress wasn’t keen on the idea, but the president was able to unilaterally make the change for new federal contractors. The White House estimated it would directly help a few hundred thousand people, but argues the bigger impact has been that several states and localities raised their minimum wage last year after Obama raised the debate.

■ RETIREMENT SAVINGS

American satisfaction

A Gallup poll asks Americans how satisfied they are with the state of the nation.

	Jan. 2014 %	Jan. 2015 %	Change
State of the nation’s economy	28	41	↑ 13
Overall quality of life	74	84	↑ 10
Opportunity to get ahead	54	60	↑ 6
Availability of affordable health care	38	43	↑ 5
Nation’s laws or policies on guns	40	42	↑ 2
Government and how well it works	35	37	↑ 2
Quality of public education	39	40	↑ 1
Size & influence of major corporations	35	36	↑ 1
Acceptance of gays and lesbians	53	53	0
Quality of medical care	56	56	0
Nation’s energy policies	40	39	↓ 1
Effort to deal with poverty/homeless	27	26	↓ 1
Influence of organized religion	54	53	↓ 1
Way wealth and income are distributed	32	31	↓ 1
Role U.S. plays in world affairs	40	38	↓ 2
Nation’s military strength and preparedness	72	69	↓ 3
Quality of the environment	55	52	↓ 3
Moral and ethical climate	35	32	↓ 3
Nation’s policies regarding abortion	38	34	↓ 4
Level of immigration	38	33	↓ 5
Social Security and Medicare system	42	37	↓ 5
Amount paid in federal taxes	38	32	↓ 6
Nation’s policies to reduce crime	51	45	↓ 6
Nation’s security from terrorism	69	59	↓ 10
State of race relations	55	30	↓ 25

Source: Gallup

Graphic: Tribune News Service

Obama was able to create a new retirement savings account—dubbed “myRA” for “my IRA”—geared toward low- and middle-income Americans who don’t have the upfront investment that many commercial IRAs require. For years, Obama has been asking Congress to encourage more Americans to grow a retirement nest egg by allowing all workers to be automatically enrolled in IRAs unless they specifically opt out. But Congress hasn’t acted on that, so Obama offered the more modest myRA plan. The Treasury Department has set up a new security as the basis for the investment and for the past month has been running a pilot program with a small group of employers, with plans to expand the program by the end of 2015.

■ TAXES

While most of Obama’s proposals last year were positions he had long advocated, one of the few new proposals

he offered was extension of the earned-income tax credit, which helps boost the wages of low-income families through tax refunds. Obama wanted it broadened to provide more help to workers without children, a view embraced by some Republicans and conservative economists. “Let’s work together to strengthen the credit, reward work, and help more Americans get ahead,” Obama said optimistically—too optimistically, it turned out. The proposal never passed.

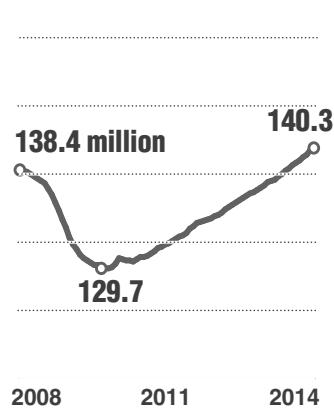
■ ENERGY

Obama said the goal of his energy policy is to create jobs and a cleaner planet and announced that he wanted to set higher fuel economy standards for trucks. He followed up by visiting a Safeway distribution center to promote the idea. The process for making the change is underway within the administration, with a new regulation planned to be proposed in March 2015 and finalized in March 2016.

How are we doing?

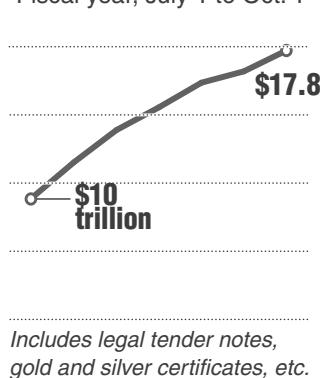
President Barack Obama will deliver the State of the Union address to a joint session of Congress on Tuesday. By the numbers, the actual state of our union over the course of his presidency.

Employment, nonfarm Seasonally adjusted



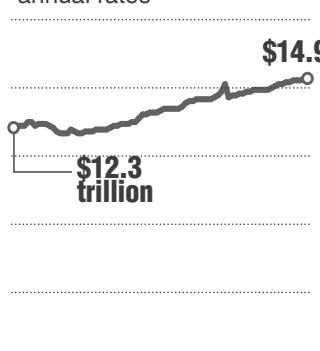
Outstanding debt

Fiscal year, July 1 to Oct. 1

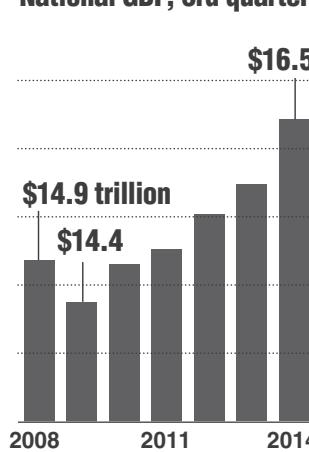


Personal income

Seasonally adjusted, annual rates



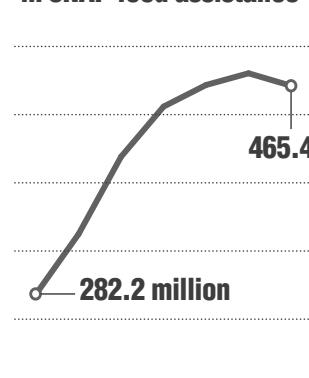
National GDP, 3rd quarter



Housing starts



Average participation in SNAP food assistance



MLK's legacy honored with tributes, rallies around nation

ATLANTA (AP)—Speakers honoring the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. at his spiritual home in Atlanta repeated the same message on his national holiday Monday: We’ve come a long way, but there’s still much to be done to fulfill King’s dream.

The holiday came against the backdrop of recent national protests over the deaths of unarmed black men and youths at the hands of the police around the U.S. Some new protests flared Monday: several dozen demonstrators blocked traffic while marching in Cleveland, Ohio, and protests also were reported in St. Louis, Missouri and Seattle, Washington.

In Atlanta, King’s daughter, the Rev. Bernice King, urged those gathered at Ebenezer Baptist Church for the 47th annual Martin Luther King Jr. Annual Commemorative Service to act out against injustice. She also said they should heed her fa-

ther’s message of nonviolence. “We cannot act unless we understand what Dr. King taught us. He taught us that we still have a choice to make: nonviolent coexistence or violent co-annihilation,”

she said. “I challenge you to work with us as we help this nation choose nonviolence.” The courage and sacrifice of the civil rights activists of the 1950s and 1960s provide a model for those seeking to ef-

fect change today, she added.

She also made reference to the high-profile deaths. Those have included the deaths of unarmed black men in Ferguson, Missouri, and in New York City, as well as the fatal shooting of

a 12-year-old boy in Cleveland, Ohio. All three were killed by white officers.

“I cannot help but remember many women and men who have been gunned down, not by a bad police force but by some bad actors in a police force,” she said.

The Northeast Ohio Media Group reported about 60 people gathered Monday at a recreation center where a Cleveland police officer fatally shot the 12-year-old. Their march ended at the city’s public square and police told the group some arrests were made.

ACROSS THE NATION

Report: 1 dead, 1 injured in overpass collapse in Cincinnati

CINCINNATI (AP)—Fire and EMS officials say a construction worker was killed and a tractor trailer driver was injured when a highway overpass collapsed in Cincinnati. The Cincinnati Fire Department says the bridge was undergoing demolition at the time of the collapse near Hopple Street at about 10:30 p.m. Monday. Fire officials say southbound Interstate 75 was closed indefinitely. It wasn’t clear what caused the collapse. Officials say hundreds of thousands of

pounds of concrete fell onto the roadway. At least one person was seen damaged. The injured driver was taken to the University of Cincinnati Medical Center. The driver’s condition was unknown. A witness told WLWT 5 that he heard “a real big boom” and then a couple of seconds later he saw police cars rushing to the scene.

Wanted teen agrees to return to home state of Kentucky

PANAMA CITY, Fla. (AP)—The drama surrounding two teenage sweethearts on the run

from the law ended quietly and unceremoniously in a Florida beach town. Dalton Hayes, an 18-year-old suspected of committing a string of crimes with his 13-year-old girlfriend, agreed during a quick Monday morning court hearing to return to his home state of Kentucky to face charges. Hayes and his girlfriend Cheyenne Phillips were arrested late Saturday night in Panama City Beach by the U.S. Marshal’s Service and local police after being found sleeping in a stolen vehicle. The couple allegedly began their run from the

law and their families earlier this month when they vanished from their small hometown in western Kentucky.

Fire official: 6 unaccounted for in Maryland mansion blaze

ANNAPOLIS, Md. (AP)—Six people remain unaccounted for after a fierce fire gutted a 16,000-square-foot mansion just outside Maryland’s capital early Monday, a fire official said. The fire was reported about 3:30 a.m. by an alarm monitoring company and a neighbor who saw flames at

the mansion near Annapolis, said Capt. Russ Davies, spokesman for the Anne Arundel County Fire Department. Earlier, Davies had said the home’s occupants might have been out of town. Teary-eyed neighbors gathered near the gate leading to the waterfront home. Two teddy bears and flowers were placed beside the gate leading to the home. Online records of the Maryland Department of Assessments and Taxation list Don and Sandra Pyle as owners of the home, which the records say is their principal residence.

Asia

China's 2014 economic growth slowest in more than 2 decades

HONG KONG (AP)—China's economic growth slowed to 7.4 percent in 2014, the weakest expansion in more than two decades, and is forecast to slip further over the next two years.

The numbers released Tuesday are still miles ahead of growth rates in major industrialized economies, but represent a sharp decline from sizzling double digit growth in previous years. That adds to pressure on the country's communist leaders as they try to prevent a sharper slowdown in 2015 while overhauling the economy.

The 2014 performance was the slowest for the world's second-biggest economy since 1990, when growth tumbled to 3.8 percent in the wake of economic sanctions after the Tiananmen Square crackdown. It undershoots the official full-year target of 7.5 percent.

China's slowdown is partly a function of Beijing's efforts to transform the economy, weaning it off overreliance on heavy industry and trade in favor of domestic consumption. But the transition has been buffeted by a range of problems, including a slumping property market and uneven exports.

Chinese officials have tried to lower expectations by saying growth below the official target would be acceptable.

President Xi Jinping said last year that the economy has entered a "new normal." But a surprise interest rate cut by policymakers in November indicated they were worried about a politically dangerous spike in job losses.

Growth in the fourth quarter of last year was 7.3 percent, unchanged from the previous quarter, which was the slow-

est quarterly expansion in five years. China's economy grew 7.7 percent in 2013.

At a news conference, Ma Jiantang, the director of the National Bureau of Statistics, said that last year's growth "was within a reasonable range" while growth in 2015 is expected to be "stable."

"However, we should also be aware that the domestic and international situations are still complicated and the economic development is facing with difficulties and challenges," he said.

Chinese businesses were bracing for a more painful year.

"The economic outlook is not so optimistic I'm afraid. Competition will be even more difficult," said Han Yi, a sales manager at Tianjin Yihsin Packing Plastic Co., which employs 700 people making plastic cups and cookie packaging at Tianjin, about an hour southeast of Beijing.

Han complained that sales in 2014 dipped about 5 percent from the year before and the company had to improve product quality and reliability to compete for new clients. Even then, it was able to win only one new account from a rapidly expanding customer.

"The situation would be much worse if we could not win this new client," he said.

Some analysts expect China to gradually dole out stimulus in 2015 to prevent growth from fading too fast. But they don't expect a major spending splurge as debt is already at worrying levels after the credit-fueled response to the 2008 global crisis.

"Credit risks will likely continue to prevent policymakers from using monetary policy too aggressively in order to shore up growth," said Julian

Evans-Pritchard of Capital Economics, who forecasts 7.0 percent growth this year.

Consumption should receive a boost from the slump in global oil prices but is unlikely to fully offset the slowdown of investment in areas

already suffering from overcapacity such as property and heavy industry, he said.

International agencies have trimmed their global growth forecasts partly in response to the slowdown in China, a significant driver of world eco-

nomic growth.

The International Monetary Fund on Tuesday lowered its forecasts by 0.3 percentage point for each of the next two years, warning about persistent weakness in most major economies.

It downgraded its forecasts for China's growth over the same period, with 6.8 percent growth expected in 2015, down from an October prediction of 7.1 percent. The IMF's forecast for 2016 was cut by half a point to 6.3 percent.



ANNUAL RITUAL

Hindu pilgrims arrive for the holy dip at Sangam, the confluence of the Ganges and the Yamuna rivers during the annual traditional fair "Magh Mela" in Allahabad, India, Monday, Jan. 19, 2015. Hundreds of thousands of devout Hindus are expected to take holy dips at the confluence during the astronomically auspicious period of over 45 days celebrated as Magh Mela.

AP

Pope: Catholics don't have to breed 'like rabbits'

ABOARD THE PAPAL PLANE

(AP)—Pope Francis is firmly upholding church teaching banning contraception, but said Monday that Catholics don't have to breed "like rabbits" and should instead practice "responsible parenting."

Speaking to reporters en route home from the Philippines, Francis said there are plenty of church-approved ways to regulate births. But he said most importantly, no outside institution should impose its views on regulating family size, blasting what he called the "ideological colonization" of the developing world.

African bishops, in particular, have long complained about

how progressive, Western ideas about birth control and gay rights are increasingly being imposed on the developing world by groups, institutions or individual nations, often as a condition for development aid.

"Every person deserves to conserve its identity without being ideologically colonized," Francis said.

The pope's comments, taken together with his defense of the Catholic Church's ban on artificial contraception during the trip, signal that he is increasingly showing his more conservative bent, which has largely been ignored by public opinion or obscured by a media narra-

tive that has tended to highlight his populist persona.

On the trip, Francis gave his strongest defense yet of the 1968 encyclical *Humanae Vitae*, which enshrined the church's opposition to artificial birth control. He warned against "insidious attacks" against the family—a reference to gay marriage proposals—echoing language often used by overwhelmingly conservative U.S. bishops. And he insisted that "openness to life is a condition of the sacrament of matrimony."

At the same time, however, he said it's not true that to be a good Catholic "you have to be like rabbits." On the contrary, he

said "responsible parenthood" requires that couples regulate the births of their children, as church teaching allows. He cited the case of a woman he met who was pregnant with her eighth child after seven Cesarean sections.

"That is an irresponsibility!" he said. The woman might argue that she should trust in God. "But God gives you methods to be responsible," he said.

He said there are many "licit" ways of regulating births that are approved by the church, an apparent reference to the Natural Family Planning method of monitoring a woman's cycle to avoid intercourse when she is ovulating.

Suspected US drone strike kills 4 militants in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (AP)—A suspected U.S. drone strike killed four militants Monday near Pakistan's northwestern border with Afghanistan while three security troops and seven militants were killed in a clash in another tribal region near the border, officials said.

Two missiles fired from the drone targeted a militant hideout in the Shawal area of Pakistan's North Waziristan tribal region, officials said. They did

not elaborate.

The two Pakistani officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to brief the media.

Their account could not be independently verified as journalists are not allowed to work in tribal areas. American officials do not discuss the strikes, which anger many Pakistanis over civilian casualties, as well as claims that they violate Pakistan's territorial sovereignty.

The tribal region is home to both local and al-Qaida-linked foreign militants, including Afghan insurgents who focus on attacking American and NATO forces in Afghanistan.

The Pakistani army launched a major offensive in North Waziristan in mid-June. On Dec. 16, local Taliban militants responded by killing 150 people at an army-run school in Peshawar, 134 of them children.

Pakistan's civilian and mili-

tary leadership has promised since the school attack to take on all militants. Pakistan has been accused in the past of tolerating certain militant groups as proxies against neighboring Afghanistan and India.

Also on Monday, two paramilitary troops and one army officer were killed in a clash with militants during a search operation in the northwest of the country, said Suhail Khan, a senior government official in the area.

ASIAN BRIEFS

Wall at Philippine warehouse collapses, killing 10 workers

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—A concrete wall at a warehouse being built in the Philippines collapsed Monday, killing at least 10 workers, police said. Five other workers were seriously injured in the collapse in Guiguinto town in Bulacan province just north of Manila, a police report said. The wall fell on a shack housing workers, and rescuers with cranes were searching for other possible victims under the concrete slabs, it said. Accidents at construction sites are often blamed on inadequate enforcement of safety regulations by authorities and private companies.

Vietnam sentences 8 to death for heroin trafficking

HANOI, Vietnam (AP)—State-controlled media say a court in northern Vietnam has sentenced eight people to death for heroin trafficking. The Tuoi Tre newspaper says the eight people, including two women, were convicted of trafficking 189 kilograms (416 pounds) of heroin after a two-week trial by the People's Court in Hoa Binh province that ended Monday. The newspaper said Tuesday that five defendants in the smuggling ring were sentenced to life in prison while 17 others were jailed for six to 20 years for the same charges. Vietnam has some of the world's toughest drug laws. Possessing or trafficking 100 grams (3.5 ounces) of heroin is punishable by death.

World

Yemeni troops battle Shiite rebels in Yemeni capital

SANA, Yemen (AP)—Yemen's U.S.-backed leadership came under serious threat Monday as government troops clashed with Shiite rebels near the presidential palace and a key military base in what one official called "a step toward a coup."

The militants seized control of state media in fierce fighting that marked the biggest challenge yet to President Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi by the rebels, known as Houthis,

who swept down from their northern strongholds last year and captured the capital in September.

The violence threatened to undermine efforts by the U.S. and its allies to battle al-Qaida's Yemeni affiliate, which claimed responsibility for the attack on a Paris satirical magazine this month and which Washington has long viewed as the global network's most dangerous branch.

The Houthis and forces loyal

to Hadi have been in a tense standoff for months and the two sides traded blame for the outbreak of violence Monday. Witnesses said heavy machine gun fire could be heard as artillery shells struck around the presidential palace. Civilians in the area fled as columns of black smoke rose over the palace and sirens wailed throughout the city.

Hadi, whose government has ceded control over nearly the entire capital, doesn't live at the

palace, and extra soldiers and tanks deployed around his private residence, which is nearby.

As fighting escalated Monday, the convoys of Yemen's prime minister and a top official affiliated with the Houthis came under fire, and rebel fighters took over Yemen state television and its official SABA news agency, Information Minister Nadia Sakkaf said.

"This is a step toward a coup and it is targeting the state's legitimacy," Sakkaf told The As-

sociated Press.

Cease-fire negotiations continued throughout the day by a presidential committee that included the interior and defense ministers, a presidential aide and a tribal sheik close to the Houthis. By the end of the day, a tenuous truce appeared to be holding.

The announcement of a cease-fire came after witnesses said the rebels had seized control of strategic hills that overlook both the

palace and the military camp south of it. There was no government confirmation of the loss of territory.

At least nine people were killed in the fighting and 67 were injured, Yemen's deputy health minister, Nasser Baoum, told the AP.

Yemen's Western and international allies, including the U.S. and Saudi Arabia, called for steps to implement and consolidate the cease-fire, expressing their support for Hadi.

Deadly Israeli strike deals painful blow to Hezbollah, Iran



can afford to open up another front with Israel.

Jihad Mughniyah, who was buried Monday in south Beirut, did not hold a particularly senior rank in the party. But he was the son of Imad Mughniyah, a top Hezbollah operative widely considered to have built Hezbollah's military operations infrastructure and the sec-

AP Hezbollah fighters carry the coffin of Jihad Mughniyah, the son of Imad Mughniyah, a top Hezbollah operative assassinated in 2008 in Damascus and one of the six Hezbollah fighters killed in what the group said was an Israeli airstrike Sunday in the Golan, during his funeral procession, in southern Beirut, Lebanon, Monday, Jan. 19, 2015.

ond most revered figure inside Hezbollah.

He was assassinated in 2008 in Damascus in a bombing that Hezbollah says was carried out by Israel's Mossad spy agency.

The 25-year-old Mughniyah took on a more prominent role after the death of his father. He has been photographed with Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah, the group's leader, and with the powerful Iranian Gen. Qassem Soleimani, highlighting his prominence within the group.

"For Hezbollah leaders, rank and file, and core supporters, the attack against Jihad Mughniyah is akin to an attack against a member of their own family," said Randa Slim, a director at the Washington-based Middle East Institute.

Kenya: Police tear-gas school kids in demo over playground

NAIROBI, Kenya (AP)—Kenyan police Monday tear-gassed schoolchildren demonstrating against the removal of their school's playground, which has been allegedly grabbed by a powerful politician, said a Kenyan human rights activist.

The students from Langata Road Primary School were in the front line of people pulling down a wall erected around the playground which

has been acquired by a private developer said to be a powerful politician, said Boniface Mwangi. Primary school children in Kenya are usually between six and 14 years of age.

"The governor, the senator and other government officials are all scared of the

politician, they cannot do anything to stop the playground from being taken," Mwangi said. Television footage showed children, some being carried away, writhing in pain, screaming and choking because of the tear-gas. Police officers later brought dogs to the playground.

Acting police chief Samuel Arachi said he had suspended the police officer who was in charge at the scene of the protest.

In such an incident tear gas is not used because the protests were not violent, Arachi said. He said five people have been arrested; three for vandalism and two for incitement.

"We will never allow officers to use force not only on any citizen more so on children whether in a demonstration or otherwise," he said.

Elijah Mwangi, who was in charge of the police officers at the school, said he was following orders.

Opposition politician Eliud Owalo said last week that the playground had been grabbed to construct a parking lot for the politician's hotel adjacent to the school.

BEIRUT (AP)—Beating their chests in anger and chanting "Death to Israel," thousands of mourners marched Monday in a funeral procession for a prominent Hezbollah fighter killed with five other members of the Shiite militant group in an Israeli airstrike in Syria's

Golan Heights.

Tehran added to the combustible mix by announcing that the strike—neither confirmed nor denied by Israel—also killed a senior Iranian general, underscoring the extent of Iran and Hezbollah's deep involvement in the volatile area on Is-

rael's doorstep.

Sunday's deadly attack placed Hezbollah in a tough spot, as it weighs carefully how to respond. A significant retaliation risks drawing even tougher Israeli reprisals, plunging Lebanon into yet another crippling war with the Jewish

state for which there is very little appetite among Lebanese public opinion.

Stretched thin and neck-deep in Syria's civil war where the group's Shiite fighters are battling alongside President Bashar Assad's forces, Hezbollah must also decide whether it

To counter terror, Europe's police reconsider their arms

PARIS (AP)—One was a young policewoman, unarmed on the outskirts of Paris and felled by an assault rifle. Her partner, also without weapons, could do nothing to stop the gunman. Another was a first responder with a side arm, rushing to the Charlie Hebdo offices where a pair of masked men with high-powered weapons had opened fire on an editorial meeting. Among their primary targets: the armed police bodyguard inside the room.

With the deaths of the three French officers during three days of terror in the Paris region and the suggestion of a plot in Belgium to kill police, European law enforcement agencies are rethinking how—

and how many—police should be armed.

Scotland Yard said Sunday it was increasing the deployment of officers allowed to carry firearms in Britain, where many cling to the image of the unarmed "bobby." In Belgium, where officials say a terror network was plotting to attack police, officers are again permitted to take their service weapons home.

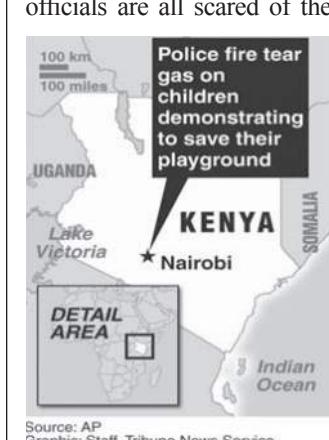
On Monday, French law enforcement officials demanding heavier weapons, protective gear and a bolstered intelligence apparatus met with top officials from the Interior Ministry. An official with the ministry, speaking on condition of anonym-

ity to discuss ongoing talks, said automatic weapons and heavier bulletproof vests were on the table.

Among the most horrific images from the Paris attacks was the death of police officer Ahmed Merabet, who can be seen on eyewitness video lying wounded on the pavement as a gunman approaches and fires a final bullet into his head. Merabet, who is seen alone on the street, had a service gun and a bullet proof vest, said Michel Thooris, of the France Police labor union UNSA.

Among those weapons, he added, are modernized criminal databases, because the current databases are out of date, and firewalled between different law enforcement branches. "The databases are not interactive. They are not accessible to all. They are not up to date," he said.

"We don't want necessarily the arms that American police have. We need weapons that can respond," said Philippe Capon of French police union UNSA.



Focus

GRIGNY, France (AP) — The housing project that was home to Amedy Coulibaly is a concrete labyrinth so scary that doctors refuse to make house calls and mail workers won't deliver parcels. Drug dealers and teenage thugs hold sway over the blighted neighborhood.

Even the police venture only with caution into the Grande Borne, especially after dark. The project's maze of serpentine, run-down buildings housing 11,000 people gives gangs plenty of cover to mount ambushes against officers with pump-action shotguns and gasoline bombs.

It would be simplistic to argue that Coulibaly—a partner of the Charlie Hebdo attackers, killer of a policewoman and four hostages at a kosher store—became a terrorist because he grew up in this enclave of high unemployment and crime where the authority of the French state is weak. Many others from the Grande Borne and his generation turned out just fine. One of Coulibaly's sisters is making her name as a dancer. A former classmate is a financial comptroller, another helps manage the career of 2005 hurdles world champion Ladjou Doucoure.

"Our towns are not terrorist factories," Philippe Rio, the mayor who also grew up in the Grande Borne, insisted in an interview with The Associated Press.

But it was here in what the mayor calls one of France's "abandoned, difficult territories" that Coulibaly started to veer off the rails as a teenager, graduating from petty crime to armed robberies that set him on a trajectory of multiple spells in prison. Behind bars, he met Cherif Kouachi, one of the Charlie Hebdo assassins, and others with whom he became radicalized.

Built in the 1960s as affordable working-class housing, the Grande Borne now looks like a giant social and architectural mistake. Its lack of roads were intended to make it child-friendly but ended up making it difficult to police. The three, four and five-story blocks with fetid stairwells and dead-ends also make perfect crime hideouts and stashes for drugs.

Poorly served by public transport and cut off by a motorway—as well as its turbulent reputation—the estate was one of the hotspots in a nationwide wave of riots in 2005 that exposed the deep wells of anger in France's depressed "banlieues," the suburbs where France built grim projects to house workers from former colonies who provided muscle for France's post-war growth miracle.



On Paris terrorist's turf, fears of more in the pipeline

By JOHN LEICESTER
Associated Press

Their children and grandchildren now languish there—with, some say, few ways out.

Monique Vareillaud, Coulibaly's primary school teacher when he was 8, remembers a kid "just like all the others" but also "the little king" of his large family—the only boy among nine sisters. In a school photo from the following year, Coulibaly is the only pupil leaning forward on his chair, chin resting pensively on the back of his hand, like Auguste Rodin's sculpture "The Thinker."

In his teens, the authority of school and parents began to lose grip on Coulibaly, and crime sank in its claws. His Islamic faith also "was starting to take shape," said Grande Borne social worker De-Charles Claude Aka. Coulibaly became more dedicated than other neighborhood kids in attending daily prayers and, on a trip to DisneyLand, kept himself apart from the girls, Aka recalled in an AP interview.

Aka lost sight of Coulibaly in 1999. Then suddenly last year, his former charge reappeared in his office, seemingly with

something important to say. Whatever it was, Aka failed to tease it out of him. He is now haunted by the idea that Coulibaly may already have been plotting last week's killing spree, and perhaps could have been reasoned with. Instead, they made small talk.

"To be honest, I kicked myself," Aka said. "I started to run the film in my head of his visit. He had bulked up so much, become a big boy."

By then, Coulibaly had done long spells of prison time, with six separate convictions for robbery, armed robbery and drug trafficking and another on terrorism-related charges.

In 2000, when Coulibaly was 18, police shot and killed one of his teenage friends when they were stealing motorbikes together, neighborhood police say. In a later drama, his lawyer Damien Brossier recounted, Coulibaly's getaway car plunged off a bridge after he robbed a sports clothing store at gunpoint. Coulibaly coolly carried on as if nothing had happened.

Brossier also defended Coulibaly after he and a friend drove

more than 200 kilometers (120 miles) by motorbike to rob a bank and then two cafes. "Quite a hothead," Brossier said in an AP interview.

Out of prison, Coulibaly became increasingly radicalized, regularly visiting and seeking advice from Djamel Beghal, a convicted terrorist living under surveillance in rural central France. In an Islamic religious ceremony in 2009 not recognized by French law, Coulibaly wed Hayat Boumeddiene, a Frenchwoman of North African origin who, unusually for France, wore an Islamic veil even though doing so cost her job as a cashier. Boumeddiene traveled to Turkey before the Charlie Hebdo attacks and Turkish officials confirm she crossed over into Syria.

Brossier says it is wrong to automatically assume that other criminals like Coulibaly also will also graduate to Islamic terrorism. But, in defending them, he also sees how kids from the wrong side of the tracks in places like the Grande Borne copy older delinquents.

Rather than survive on social

welfare like their parents, they get lured by the easy money of drug dealing and crime. Often, the next stop is the huge Fleury-Merogis prison next to the Grande Borne where Coulibaly served time. Coulibaly surreptitiously filmed the prison's hellish conditions, which then were subsequently exposed in a TV documentary.

"The spiral starts progressively," Brossier said. "There is a huge waste of potential in these cities."

Coulibaly's former kickboxing coach in the Grande Borne, Rombo Togbahoun, fears there are more like him in the pipeline.

"Look at those kids out there with their hoodies," he said. "We're only seeing the start of the problem. That was just the first Amedy Coulibaly. There are lots of little Coulibalys."

Has much changed in the Grande Borne and other rotting projects since the government launched action plans for them after the 2005 riots?

"Yes and no," Rio, the mayor, replies.

The Grande Borne now has

a new cultural center and new gymnasium—which was quickly targeted in an arson attack last October—and is getting a tram link and other improvements. But 40 percent of residents aged 16-25 have no work. After being robbed four times in one year, the pharmacy shut down. There is just one full-time doctor. Residents and the mayor complain that potential employers turn people away because they are from the Grande Borne.

"The republic must ask itself real questions," Rio said. "For us to feel part of the republic, to love the republic, the republic has to love us back."

Racial discrimination also is an obstacle for France's minorities. The mayor, who is white, acknowledged that his skin color might be part of the reason why his trajectory from the same estate has been so different from that of the black Coulibaly, born in France to parents from Mali.

Minorities have long complained that their names and color can hold them back in work and careers and attract greater police scrutiny and checks. This in a political context where the anti-immigration, extreme-right National Front party has made electoral headway, making some minority French citizens feel even more unwelcome.

"I went through the same school (as Coulibaly), which means we had the same teachers at one time," the mayor said. "That fills me, and many people here of my age, with questions."

"I'm not called Mohammed or Mamadou," he said. "I know that really is an extra difficulty."

Good Housekeeping

Raise your home's IQ with smart gadgets

LAS VEGAS (AP)—Imagine a world in which your garage door opens automatically as you pull into the driveway. The living room lights and heater turn on—perhaps the oven starts warming up, too. In the so-called “smart home,” cars, appliances and other devices all have sensors and Internet connectivity to think and act for themselves, and make your life easier.

We’re not there just yet, but we’re getting closer.

The smart-home concept is known in tech circles as the Internet of Things. Current iterations primarily include our ability to control gadgets such as lights and security alarms or view data remotely through a smartphone app. At the International CES gadget show in Las Vegas this week, manufacturers will promote more devices and functionality. Some gadgets will be able to talk directly with one another, not just to an app. The four-day show opens to the public Tuesday.

The Internet of Things could mean big business for gadget makers. The Consumer Electronics Association projects sales of smart energy and security systems alone will total \$574 million this year, a 23 percent increase from 2014. Although that pales by comparison to the \$18 billion spent on TVs and displays, growth has been swift. In terms of people smartening up their homes in earnest, though, it will probably be another two years before devices are cheap and widespread enough for the typical consumer, says Eduardo Pinheiro, CEO of Muzzley, which makes a hub that allows devices to talk to each other.

For now, the smart home is more about possibilities than practice. Many companies exhibiting at CES are laying the foundation for what a smart-home system will eventually do, hoping to entice consumers to start thinking about upgrading to smart gadgets. It’s not always an easy sell.

Consider wearable devices that track fitness and other activities. In many cases, the novelty wears off quickly, and devices end up in drawers. But what if a wearable device that tracks sleep could tell the coffeemaker to start brewing as soon as you awoke? When the coffee’s done, what if the sprinklers on the front lawn automatically turned



AP
Jerome Bouvard demonstrates the Parrot Pot at CES Unveiled, a media preview event for CES International, Sunday, Jan. 4, 2015, in Las Vegas.

off so you didn’t get wet walking out the front door to work?

For example, Lucis Technologies will soon ship a smart-lighting device called NuBryte that can learn your behavior, such as what time you tend to come home. Sensors can turn on the night light if you wake up to use the bathroom but switch on brighter lights during the day. A coffeemaker from Smarter will soon use data from fitness trackers such as Fitbit. If you had a bad night of sleep, the coffeemaker will know to make the java stronger that morning. Other products focus on better notifications: a battery for a smoke detector to alert you on your phone when the alarm goes off, or a bracelet that vibrates when the baby cries in its crib. (Moms rejoice: the bracelet is even smart enough to alternate which parent it alerts to get up.)

“It’s got to be something people are seeing it can do and want it to do,” says Chris Penrose, AT&T’s senior vice president for the Internet of Things. “It’s got to make

their lives better and be incredibly easy to use.”

“True consumer value will come when devices work in concert with one another and in many cases across manufacturers,” adds Brett Dibkey, a Whirlpool Corp. vice president. “The home adapts to the way consumers live rather than the other way around.”

At CES, Whirlpool will showcase dryers that can run at a slower, energy-saving cycle if you aren’t home and thus aren’t in a rush. The dryer integrates with Google Inc.’s Nest smart thermostat, which has sensors to figure out that no one’s home and then lowers the heat automatically. Meanwhile, a smart-home hub called DigitalStrom plans to take cues from Nest. If Nest is trying to cool down the house, for instance, DigitalStrom will lower automated window shades to block out sunlight.

These are the building blocks for an eventual automated home. Once those building blocks are in place, services can better predict what you want. For example, Net-

flix is already good about recommending movies to watch based on your preferences, but it might suggest something different if it could read data from a wearable device or camera and tell that you’re with friends, or stressed out, says Shawn Dubravac, senior director of research with the Consumer Electronics Association.

As we get closer to being able to live like the Jetsons, manufacturers will have to convince consumers that the technology is secure from hackers—and that convenience and peace of mind are worth any risks.

Ann Poletti, who now uses the Nest thermostat at her home in San Francisco, said her first apartment burned down, so she is sensitive to making sure all her appliances are off. The Internet of Things would let her check remotely.

“Toothbrushes and ironing boards, one day it will all be connected. I think that’s great,” says Poletti. “Some people don’t want all the data out there. I’m worried about access to my bank account, less so about whether my heat is going on or off.”

ture to a boil. Lower heat, cover and simmer for 10 minutes.

2. Stir in fish pieces and continue simmering for 10 minutes or until vegetables and fish are tender. Add evaporated milk, fat-free milk and Cheddar cheese. Mix well to combine. Continue simmering until cheese melts, stirring often.

3. When serving, garnish each bowl with parsley flakes. Makes 6 (1 1/3 cup) servings.

■ *Each serving equals: 208 calories, 4g fat, 18g protein, 25g carb., 365mg sodium, 2g fiber; Diabetic Exchanges: 1 1/2 Meat, 1 Fat-Free Milk, 1 Vegetable, 1/2 Starch.*

COMFORT FOOD

Neptune Chowder

By HEALTHY EXCHANGES
KING FEATURES SYNDICATE

Here’s a hearty soup that features the bounty of the sea. If you’re lucky enough to live in an area where fresh fish is abundant, use it! But, if you’re like us and are in a landlocked section of the country, the frozen works just fine.

- 2 cups thinly sliced onion
- 1 cup chopped celery
- 2 cups diced raw potatoes
- 1 cup shredded carrots

- 2 cups water
- 1/2 teaspoon lemon pepper
- 8 ounces white fish fillet, cut into bite-size pieces
- 1 (12-fluid-ounce) can evaporated fat-free milk
- 1 cup fat-free milk
- 1 cup shredded reduced-fat Cheddar cheese
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley or 2 teaspoons dried parsley flakes

1. In a large saucepan sprayed with butter-flavored cooking spray, sauté onion and celery for 5 minutes. Add potatoes, carrots, water and lemon pepper. Mix well to combine. Bring mix-

Salvaging old paint brushes

By SAMANTHA MAZZOTTA
(C) 2015 KING FEATURES SYNDICATE, INC.



Q: Last summer, I repainted the garage. Because I had plans to paint some other rooms, I wrapped up the rollers and brushes in old plastic shopping bags to keep the paint damp. And then ... I forgot about them. This morning while cleaning my workspace, I found them again. The paint has hardened to stone. Can I save the brushes and rollers, or do I need to just buy all new stuff?—Brad C., Kansas City, Missouri

A: I’m not going to judge. I’ve let far too many paint-laden brushes dry out myself when I got distracted. But you should definitely try to salvage the brushes and rollers before shelling out money for new paint supplies.

First, confirm what kind of paint you used in the garage last summer by checking the label on the cans of leftover paint. It most likely was latex-based interior paint, but oil-based paint is still in use.

The good news is, latex is the easiest paint to clean up, even when it’s been dried on for some time. Don’t use solvents like turpentine, alcohol, gasoline or anything else to clean latex, and don’t listen to anyone who insists you use these chemicals.

To clean latex paint off your brushes and rollers, fill a pail or utility sink with warm, soapy water. (Plain dish soap is fine.) Peel the plastic shopping bags off the brushes and discard them. If pieces of the plastic stick to the rollers or brushes, just leave them on, rather than potentially damaging the brushes by trying to pry them off. Drop the brushes and rollers into the soapy water and let them sit for at least 20 minutes.

Check to see if the dried latex is loosening up, being careful not to bend or tug at the bristles of the paintbrushes. If they’re still stiff with paint, the bristles could fray or break. Keep soaking them, checking every 20 minutes or so, until the latex loosens from the bristles and roller sponges, and you can easily push it off the brushes.

(If the brushes are still stiff or have bits of paint stuck to them, try soaking the bristles in boiling-hot white vinegar for about five minutes, then run a stiff nylon or plastic brush (never metal) through the bristles.)

Rinse the soapy water off, shake or spin the rollers and brushes to get rid of excess water, and let them dry on sheet of newspaper or clean towels.

Oil paint is a different matter. If you used oil-based paint and it has dried, you can try salvaging the brushes by soaking them in mineral spirits or paint thinner for several minutes. Make sure the room is well-ventilated, and that you wear gloves and eye protection during this process.

Roller sponges with oil paint dried on them may not be salvagable but if you need to pry them off the roller handles, apply mineral spirits or paint thinner to the ends to loosen the dried paint.

Finally, store rollers upright and either hang brushes up or store them in a clean paint can, handles down and brushes upward.

HOME TIP: To easily hang up paintbrushes, run a wire or twine across the front of a storage shelf and either thread the brushes onto the wire by the holes in their handles, or attach pegboard hooks to the wire and hang the brushes from them.—Gerry in San Diego

Send your home tips and questions to ask@thisisahammer.com.

Life & Style

Fiesta hosts appreciation night for employees

Fiesta Resort and Spa Saipan's Hibiscus Hall was the site of the annual employees appreciation night on Tuesday, Jan. 13. The event is held yearly to recognize the dedication and efforts of Fiesta employees. The evening

consisted of talent performances, parlor games, dancing and singing. Fiesta Resort and Spa Saipan general manager Abner Acosta expressed his appreciation for the dedication and hard work of the staff that



Mystery Greek tomb contained at least 5 corpses, experts say

ATHENS, Greece (AP)—Human bones found in a resplendent ancient tomb in northern Greece belong to at least five individuals, including an elderly woman and a baby, Greek officials said Monday.

The announcement by the Culture Ministry further muddles a high-profile excavation hampered by unrealistic expectations and political attention.

The three-month dig at ancient Amphipolis, 600 kilometers (375 miles) north of Athens, has uncovered three vaulted chambers behind a facade decorated with two big marble sphinxes. Inside, archaeologists found a pair of larger-than-life statues of young women and a mosaic pavement depicting the abduction of the

goddess Persephone by Hades, king of the underworld.

It is unclear when each of the five individuals died or were buried and even whether the tomb had been built for them all.

The thoroughly-plundered tomb has been dated to between 325 B.C.—two years before the death of ancient Greek warrior-king Alexander the Great—and 300 B.C., although some archaeologists think it could be considerably later. Experts speculated it could have been built for a general or a relative of Alexander's, who himself was buried in Egypt.

Monday's announcement said the human bones belonged to a woman in her 60s who suffered from osteoporosis and hormonal

problems, a newborn child of unspecified sex, two men aged 35 to 45, the youngest of whom died of stab wounds, and a fourth adult whose corpse—unlike the others—had been cremated.

Further testing is expected to date the remains and establish whether the dead were related.

Chief excavator Katerina Peristeri, who backs the buried general theory, initially insisted the grave was not plundered but changed her mind after the burial chamber was found looted.

Alexander, who built an empire from modern Greece to India, died in Babylon and was buried in the city of Alexandria, which he founded. The precise location of his tomb is one of the biggest mysteries of archaeology.

Friends: Fitness model killed by train was bold but careful

AP This undated photo provided by Bravo Media shows actor George Plitt. Plitt, who previously shot workout videos on railroad tracks was struck and killed by a train on Saturday, Jan. 17, 2015, during filming near Los Angeles.



him Saturday afternoon in Burbank, authorities and friends said.

Coulter told The Associated Press that Plitt was a West Point graduate and Army Ranger who had jumped out of planes more than 1,000 times in his life and had a taste for the extreme, but also treated everyone and everything with respect and care as befitted his military past.

“Everything Greg did, he did extremely well,” Coulter said. “This isn’t anyone who ever took a nap.”

Plitt, among the more recognizable faces and physiques in the fitness industry, was shooting a video for his website with two crew members when the Metrolink commuter train hit

who had been friends for 15 years with 37-year-old George Gregory Plitt Jr., who went by “Greg.”

Plitt, among the more recognizable faces and physiques in the fitness industry, was shooting a video for his website with two crew members when the Metrolink commuter train hit

“No question of it, it was just a mistake,” Coulter said.

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Friends of a fitness model and actor who was hit by a train and killed while making a video said Monday that he was a bold and fearless person who just made a rare mistake.

“It was just a freaky moment where something got out of control,” said Warren Coulter,

Robinson, Chast, Piketty among book critic circle prize nominees

NEW YORK (AP)—Novelist Marilynne Robinson, economist Thomas Piketty and cartoonist Roz Chast are among the finalists for National Book Critics Circle prizes.

Nobel laureate Toni Morrison will receive a lifetime achievement award, while National Book Award winner Phil Klay has won the John Leonard Prize for the best debut release of 2014, the short story collection “Redeployment.”

Leonard, who died in 2008, was a reviewer for The New York Times and other publications and a founder of the book critics circle known for championing new writers. Morrison, a rising star in the 1970s, was among his discoveries.

The 30 nominees for six competitive categories were an-

nounced Monday.

For the first time in the critics circle’s 40-year history, one book was a nominee in two categories. Claudia Rankine’s “Citizen,” a hybrid of verse, history and commentary, was cited in criticism and poetry.

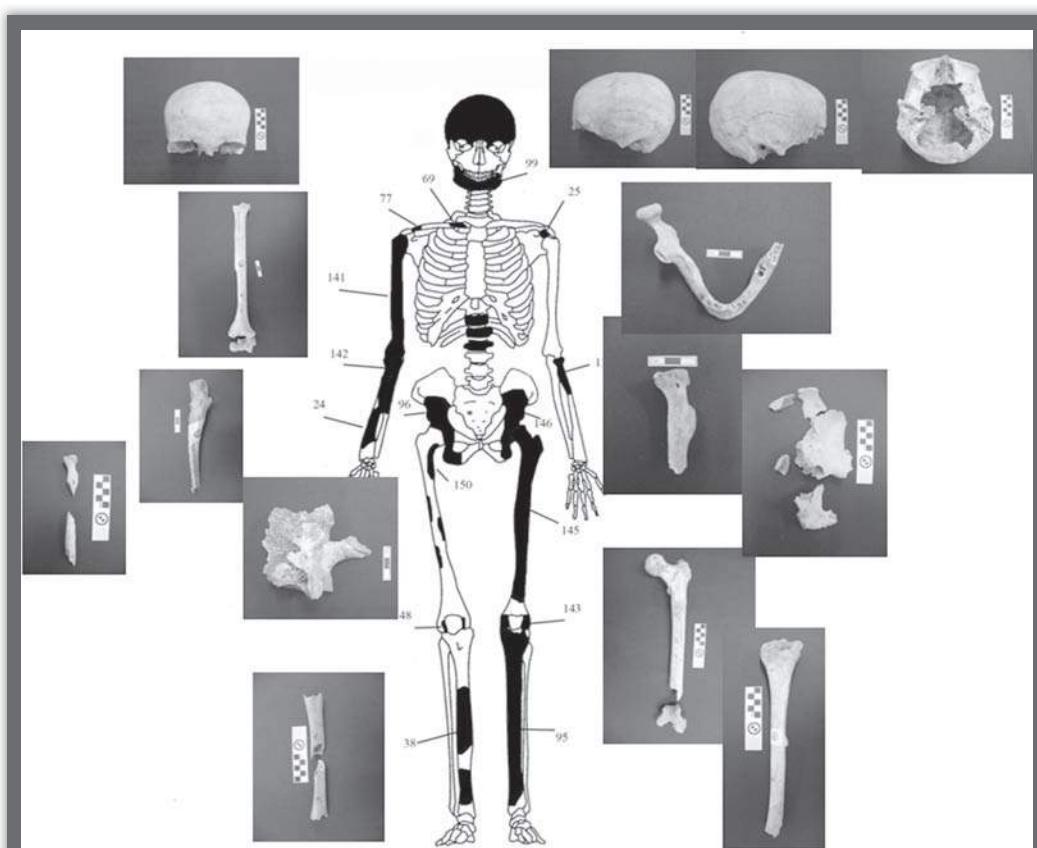
Robinson, whose “Lila” completed an award-winning trilogy set in rural Iowa that includes “Gilead” and “Home,” was one of two National Book Award fiction finalists to be selected for fiction by the book critics. Also cited for both awards was Rabih Alameddine for the Beirut-based novel “An Unnecessary Woman.”

The other fiction nominees were Jamaican novelist Marlon James’ 700-page “A Brief History of Seven Killings,” Lily King’s “Euphoria” and Chang-rae Lee’s “On Such a Full Sea.”

The critics bypassed last year’s top-selling literary novel and a National Book Award runner-up, Anthony Doerr’s World War II drama, “All the Light We Cannot See.”

Piketty’s “Capital in the Twenty-First Century,” a surprise best-seller translated from French to English by Arthur Goldhammer, is a nonfiction finalist.

One of the world’s foremost historians of slavery, David Brion Davis, also is a finalist in nonfiction for “The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Emancipation.” Other nominees in the category were Peter Finn’s and Petra Couvee’s “The Zhivago Affair,” Elizabeth Kolbert’s “The Sixth Extinction” and Hector Tobar’s “Deep Down Dark.”



This undated handout image released by the Greek Culture Ministry on Monday, Jan. 19, shows pictures of bones and their position, in black, on a human skeleton believed to belong to a woman aged over 60, from a resplendent ancient tomb excavated in northern Greece last year.

‘American Sniper’ astounds with \$105.3M over MLK weekend

NEW YORK (AP)—Clint Eastwood’s R-rated Iraq War drama “American Sniper” opened in January like a superhero movie in July, taking in a record \$105.3 million over the Martin Luther King Jr. four-day weekend.

The film’s unprecedented success obliterated forecasts and set numerous box-office records. It easily surpassed “Avatar” to become the biggest January weekend ever.

The resounding wide-release opening is also tops for the 84-year-old Eastwood, whose previous best weekend was the \$29.5 million wide release of 2009’s “Gran Torino. And it, in one weekend, gives the Oscar best-picture race something it was lacking: a big ol’ box-office hit.

“American Sniper,” nominated for six Academy Awards, immediately becomes the top grosser of the best-picture nominees. The previous biggest hit was Wes Anderson’s “Grand Budapest Hotel,” which made \$59.1 million in its entire run.

This was actually the third week of release for “American Sniper,” which played in just a handful of theaters for two weeks. That slow release pattern helped stoke demand for the film, in which Bradley Cooper stars as Navy SEAL marksman Chris Kyle.

“It’s become a cultural phenomenon,” said Dan Fellman, head of domestic distribution for Warner Bros. “The movie reached an audience that’s very hard to tap into. In both red and blue states, small and large cities, tiny towns—everywhere we went—it broke records.”

Going into the weekend, op-

timistic predictions for “American Sniper” were closer to \$50 million, which still would have been an enormous success, particularly considering how little appetite audiences have had for movies about the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

“This was maybe the most underestimated film of all time, considering that it did about twice what estimates predicted,” said Paul Dergarabedian, senior media analyst for box-office firm Rentrak. “This just doesn’t happen.”

But the film was warmly embraced by conservatives, which Fellman said was a “huge” factor. The audience, which was 57 percent male, gave it an A+ CinemaScore. Dergarabedian said “American Sniper” resonated with audiences craving a celebration of valor, courage and patriotism.

“American Sniper,” once pegged for release in late 2015, was moved up to qualify for this year’s Oscars. After Eastwood’s other 2014 release, “Jersey Boys,” struggled in its June release, totaling \$47 million, “American Sniper”—a \$58 million co-production between Warner Bros. and Village Roadshow—was tossed into this year’s Christmas mix.

The remarkable success of “American Sniper,” which made \$89.5 million over the three-day weekend, didn’t appear to hurt the business of other releases. The Weinstein Co.’s well-reviewed animated film “Paddington” opened with an estimated \$25.2 million over the four-day weekend. The Kevin

Hart, Josh Gad comedy “The Wedding Ringer” debuted with \$24.5 million for Sony Pictures.

However, Michael Mann’s cyber-thriller “Blackhat,” starring Chris Hemsworth, flopped. Made for about \$70 million by Legendary Pictures for distributor Universal Pictures, “Blackhat” bombed with just \$4.4 million.

In its fourth weekend of release, the civil rights drama “Selma” took in \$11.5 million on the holiday weekend that honors its protagonist, King. The film landed two Oscar nominations on Thursday, including best picture, but the snubbing of its star, David Oyelowo, and director, Ava DuVernay, drew widespread outrage.

1. “American Sniper,” \$105.3 million (\$6.1 million international).
2. “Paddington,” \$25.2 million (\$4 million international).
3. “The Wedding Ringer,” \$24.5 million.
4. “Taken 3,” \$17.4 million (\$31.4 million international).
5. “Selma,” \$11.5 million.
6. “Into the Woods,” \$8.7 million (\$7.3 million international).
7. “The Imitation Game,” \$8.1 million (\$4 million international).
8. “The Hobbit: The Desolation of Smaug,” \$6 million (\$6.1 million international).
9. “Night at the Museum: Secret of the Tomb,” \$5.1 million (\$17.8 million international).
10. “Unbroken,” \$5 million (\$7.3 million international).

Amazon to produce, acquire original movies

NEW YORK (AP)—Amazon is getting into the movie business.

Amazon Studios announced Monday that it will significantly expand into movie production by acquiring films for theatrical release and early-window streaming through its subscription service, Amazon Prime Instant Video. A key part of the new venture is to shrink what's historically been a three-month window reserved for theaters, instead getting movies to its website four to eight weeks after theatrical release.

Roy Price, vice president of Amazon Studios, said the company's goal is to produce 12 movies a year, with production beginning later this year.

"Not only will we bring Prime Instant Video customers exciting, unique and exclusive

films soon after a movie's theatrical run, but we hope this program will also benefit filmmakers, who too often struggle to mount fresh and daring stories that deserve an audience," said Price.

The announcement marks a new foray into the movie business for the online retail giant, which has in recent years developed a slate of TV series since Amazon Studios launched in 2010. Most recently, its acclaimed "Transparent" won two Golden Globe awards, including best comedy or musical series.

Independent film producer Ted Hope, who co-founded the production company Good Machine, will oversee creative development for the new unit, Amazon Original Movies.

The move marks the latest major digital player pushing into Hollywood's movie busi-

ness. Netflix last year inked deals with Adam Sandler and the Weinstein Co.

Amazon's entry into movies also follows Sony Pictures' unprecedented digital distribution of the Seth Rogen comedy "The Interview," the first major studio film to be released simultaneously in theaters, online and on video-on-demand platforms.

Top North American theater chains have vigorously protested such moves. On Friday, Patrick Corcoran, vice president of the National Association of Theater Owners, fired back at those who saw Sony Pictures' digital release of "The Interview" as a sign of things to come. Corcoran said the movie's release "doesn't change anything," and noted that its two-week \$31.5 million digital gross was far less the film would have made at multiplexes.

But new entrants such as Am-

azon and Netflix don't have to worry about theater chains the

way Hollywood studios do. Any Amazon Studios movie release

will likely only play in independent theaters.

Mick Jagger starts scholarship in honor of L'Wren Scott

NEW YORK (AP)—Mick Jagger has established a scholarship in honor of his late girlfriend, fashion designer L'Wren Scott.

The scholarship will allow one master's degree student per year over a period of three

years to attend the elite Central Saint Martins, the London-based college announced this weekend. Scott, who committed suicide last March at age 49, had been close to a former course director at Central Saint Martins, the late Louise Wilson.

Fabio Piras, the current course director of MA Fashion, says in a statement that he was "very grateful to receive this extremely generous scholarship package." The grant covers tuition and some living expenses.



AP

This Feb. 16, 2012 file photo shows singer Mick Jagger, right, with designer L'Wren Scott after her Fall 2012 collection was modeled during Fashion Week, in New York.

PBS to make a new drama based on Civil War nurses

PAZADENA, Calif. (AP)—PBS is making a Civil War drama focusing on the stories of two volunteer nurses on opposite sides of the conflict.

The six-episode series is being produced by Ridley Scott and David Zucker. It's the first American-made drama the public broadcasting service has made in about a decade, "so this is a really big deal for us," Paula Kerger, PBS president and CEO, said on Monday.

Based on true stories, the untitled project is centered on a hotel in Alexandria, Virginia,

that was turned into a Union army hospital, PBS said.

Kerger said the public broadcasting service's goals in making dramas is different than other television networks.

"Our goal is not only to entertain, but to educate and inspire," she said.

The series is scheduled to air next winter.

PBS also said Monday that it will air a week's worth of programming in April to mark the 40th anniversary of the fall of Saigon, including Rory Kennedy's film "Last Days in Vietnam." Ken Burns' docu-

mentary film "The Vietnam War" is scheduled to run on PBS in two years.

The public broadcasting service announced a new partnership with the BBC, where PBS will air a series of BBC-produced specials, primarily on nature, science and history.

PBS is also on the lookout for arts programming. Kerger said successful arts programming helps local arts organizations.

"If we can do that better, then we're doing something that is really at the heart of who we are as a public media organization," she said.

Cancer documentary was late actor's last project

PAZADENA, Calif. (AP)—The late actor Edward Herrmann's final project before he died of brain cancer last month was narrating an upcoming PBS documentary on the disease.

The six-hour project, based on the book "Cancer: The Em-

peror of All Maladies" by Siddhartha Mukherjee, will air over three nights in March.

Herrmann collapsed because of a seizure on the first day he came to work and had to explain to filmmaker Barak Goodman that it was because of his cancer, Goodman said.

Still, Herrmann was determined to do the work.

"He felt it appropriate that this would be his final project," Goodman said.

Herrmann, known for playing the grandfather in "Gilmore Girls," died in New York on Dec. 31.

Dad gets 'no-show' bill after son, 5, misses birthday party

LONDON (AP)—It was not what Derek Nash expected to find in his 5-year-old's school bag: A bill demanding a "no-show fee" for another child's birthday party.

Nash said the bill from another parent sought 15.95 pounds (\$24.00) because his son Alex had not attended the party at a ski center in Plymouth, southwest England.

had not attended the party at a ski center in Plymouth, southwest England.

Nash told the BBC on Monday he had initially accepted the party invitation, but later realized Alex was supposed to visit his grandparents that day. He said he did not have contact details to let the

other family know.

The birthday boy's mother, Julie Lawrence, told the BBC that her contact details were on the party invitation.

Nash says Lawrence has threatened him with small claims court but he has no plans so far to pay.

Swinging parents undermine values taught to their kids

DEAR ABBY: A short time ago, I discovered my parents are "swingers." I had picked up my mother's phone to take a picture and an incoming text caught my attention. When I read it and investigated further, I learned the truth.

I don't mind what they do with their marriage, and I respect their choices. However, my siblings and I were raised in a strict Christian home. My parents taught us the opposite of what they are doing. Now I feel they are hypocrites.

How can they tell me to act a certain way when they don't practice what they preach? I'm not sure if I should talk to them about it or drop this entirely. Help!

DISILLUSIONED DAUGHTER

DEAR DAUGHTER: What exactly do you mean when you "investigated further"? If it means you searched the history in your mother's phone, you crossed the same line children do when they search through the drawers and closets of a parent's bedroom looking for things that are none of their business.

Before labeling your parents as hypocrites, please remember that they raised you with basic values that are shared by the

majority of people. If they have "strayed from the path," it's their choice—and it may have happened AFTER they taught you your good Christian values.

I think you should talk to your mother about what you did and what you found. If you do, she may have a few more lessons to impart.

■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: My husband and I are avid sports fans and have season tickets to several sporting events. Our seats are in the middle of a row. Before we go to our seats, we check to see which way has fewer people seated so we disturb the fewest possible. We also try to leave our seats only during halftime or between innings and always apologize for disturbing anyone.

However, I am bothered that we are forced to climb over certain individuals who don't stand up to let us by. Sometimes I feel I'm almost bumping into the folks in the row ahead of us.

Is there a rule of etiquette that states that people should stand to allow others to get by? I don't want to step on toes or spill drinks on anyone. What should I do in these situations?

SQUEEZED OUT IN HOUSTON

DEAR SQUEEZED OUT: Emily Post does have a rule re-

DEAR ABBY
By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.



garding crossing in front of people in theaters and at sporting events. According to her, you should say, "Excuse me" or "Pardon me" on your way to your seat and "pass with your back to those already seated." (Personally, I would rather that someone face my navel than my posterior at eye level, but I didn't write the rule.)

■ ■ ■

For an excellent guide to becoming a better conversationalist and a more sociable person, order "How to Be Popular." Send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$7 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Popularity Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

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- Provide basic patient care or treatments, such as taking temperatures or blood pressures, dressing wounds.
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- Evaluate nursing intervention outcomes, conferring with other healthcare team members as necessary.
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- Must be able to provide a high level of standard patient care. Especially in eye care; Good communication skill, can compose correspondence, can work under minimum supervision; be able to multi-task; Self-transportation.
- Preferably have a special knowledge in computer programs relating to health care operations; (medical billing, patient electronic records, and scheduler).

Submit resume at Hardt Eye Clinic, Inc. dba Hardt Eye Clinic and Diabetes Education Center located next to Megabyte, Chalan Laulau, Beach Road Saipan. Salary commensurate to credentials and qualification.

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NFL probing whether Pats used deflated footballs



The NFL is investigating whether the New England Patriots deflated footballs that were used in their AFC championship game victory over the Indianapolis Colts.

"We are looking into it," league spokesman Brian McCarthy wrote in an email to The Associated Press on Monday. "We do not have anything further to add at this point."

The inquiry was first reported by the website for WTHR-TV in Indiana, citing an unnamed source.

"We'll cooperate fully with whatever the league wants us to, whatever questions they ask," Belichick said Monday during his regular conference call with reporters.

He said he was unaware there was an issue until Monday morning.

The Patriots have come under scrutiny with regards to NFL rules in the past, most infamously when they were punished for videotaping sideline signals used by the New York Jets during a 2007 game. Belichick was fined \$500,000, and the team was docked \$250,000 and stripped of its 2008 first-round draft pick.

According to the NFL rule book, home teams are responsible for furnishing playable balls at all times. Each team brings 12 primary balls, while home teams are required to also bring 12 backup balls.

Once the referee makes sure the footballs are properly inflated, they're delivered to ball attendants provided by the home team.

The league's game operations manual notes: "If any individual alters the footballs, or if a non-approved ball is used in the game, the person responsible and, if appropriate, the head coach or other club personnel will be subject to discipline, including but not limited to, a fine of \$25,000."

Deflating a football could change the way it would be gripped by a player or the way it travels through the air.

The Patriots beat the Colts 45-7 to reach the Super Bowl. New England will play the defending champion Seattle Seahawks for the NFL title at Glendale, Arizona, on Feb. 1.

Colts coach Chuck Pagano said he did not notice issues with the football. He



New England Patriots tight end Rob Gronkowski (87) spikes the ball after catching a five-yard touchdown pass during the second half of the NFL football AFC Championship game against the Indianapolis Colts Sunday, Jan. 18, 2015, in Foxborough, Mass. AP

did not specify when asked whether the Colts had reported the issue to officials.

"We talk just like they talk to officials (before the game), we have an opportunity to talk to the officials about a lot of things, things that you've seen on tape like the formations we talked about last week," Pagano said. "Every coach in the league gets an opportunity to visit with the officials about that kind of stuff before the game."

Colts quarterback Andrew Luck had his worst game as a pro, completing only 12 of 33 passes for 126 yards, no touchdowns and two interceptions.

In Sunday night's lopsided AFC finale, quarterback Tom Brady threw for three touchdowns and running back LeGarrette Blount gained 148 yards while scoring three touchdowns to send New England to its sixth Super Bowl in the past 14 years.

Colts quarterback Andrew Luck had his worst game as a pro, completing only 12 of 33 passes for 126 yards, no touchdowns and two interceptions.

On his regular weekly morning-after-game appearance Monday on WEEI radio, Brady said he wasn't aware of the report about the league's investigation into whether footballs were properly inflated against Indianapolis.

"I think I've heard it all at this point," Brady said with a laugh.

"That's the last of my worries," he said. "I don't even respond to stuff like this."

Scherzer, Nationals agree to \$210M, 7-year deal



WASHINGTON (AP)—Sure seems as if Max Scherzer and his wife now will be able to afford to buy themselves at least one of those nonstick baking sheets they were hoping to receive as a wedding gift.

Or even a few million of 'em.

The 2013 AL Cy Young Award winner will become the highest-paid right-handed pitcher in major league history after agreeing to a \$210 million, seven-year contract with the Washington Nationals that includes a record \$50 million signing bonus.

A person familiar with the negotiations outlined the terms to The Associated Press on Monday, speaking on condition of anonymity because the deal hadn't been announced. It creates a formidable rotation for the Nationals - who could try to boost the rest of their roster by trading one of their other starters.

Washington is now the 4-1 favorite to win the World Series, down from

6-1 odds when the offseason started.

Scherzer's signing bonus tops the previous high of \$30 million for any player, given by the Cubs to pitcher Jon Lester this offseason. Scherzer plans to establish residency in Florida, which would shield his signing bonus from D.C. income tax, the person familiar with the negotiations said.

The person said the pitcher is scheduled to take a physical Tuesday, one of the steps needed for the deal to be finalized.

Scherzer, who spent the past five seasons with the Detroit Tigers before becoming a free agent, will receive the money from the Nationals spread out over 14 years, which lowers its present-day value.

Still, Scherzer did quite well for himself. Indeed, he and his bride—they were married in November 2013—won't have to depend on their friends to finish filling the requests on their bridal registry at Crate & Barrel, including the pair of \$19.95 baking sheets that no one gave them.

The 30-year-old right-hander's contract is the second-largest for a pitcher, behind only Los Angeles Dodgers lefty Clayton Kershaw's \$215 million, seven-year deal that runs from 2014-20. The previous high for a righty was the \$180 million, seven-year agreement from 2013-19 signed by Justin Verlander, another Cy Young Award winner for the Tigers.

Scherzer turned down an offer from Detroit last March that would have paid him \$144 million from 2015-20, an average of \$24 million per year.

The Nationals will lose what would have been the 27th pick in June's amateur draft, while the Tigers will gain an extra pick after the first round.

All in all, for the Nationals, it's a surprising move to upgrade an already imposing rotation after a relatively quiet offseason for the NL East champions.

Scherzer was 18-5 with a 3.15 ERA in 2014, a year after going 21-3 with a 2.90 ERA and being voted the best pitcher in the American League. He

now joins a club whose starting staff in 2014 included Stephen Strasburg, Jordan Zimmermann, Doug Fister — Scherzer's former teammate with the Tigers — Gio Gonzalez, and Tanner Roark.

That group already was considered among the best—if not the best—rotation in the majors. The question now is what move could come next for the Nationals, who might pursue a trade.

Zimmermann went 14-5 with a 2.66 ERA and 182 strikeouts in 199 2-3 innings in 2014, and he threw the first no-hitter in Nationals history on the last day of the regular season. But he can enter free agency after next season.

Last season, Strasburg was 14-11 with a 3.14 ERA and 242 strikeouts in 215 innings; Fister was 16-6 with a 2.41 ERA; Gonzalez went 10-10 with a 3.57 ERA, and Roark went 15-10 with a 2.85 ERA in 198 2-3 innings.

Gonzalez, third in NL Cy Young Award voting in 2012, is the only left-hander in the bunch.

SIDE BAR

Kubiak hired as Broncos head coach

ENGLEWOOD, Colo. (AP)—John Elway and Gary Kubiak are back together drawing up blueprints for the Denver Broncos to get back to the Super Bowl.

Elway hired Kubiak on Monday, inking his former backup QB and offensive coordinator to a four-year contract. Kubiak replaces John Fox, who was ousted last week following Denver's stunning loss to the Indianapolis Colts in the AFC divisional playoffs.

"Having coached on three Super Bowl teams and 11 playoff teams, Gary knows what it will take to deliver another world championship" to Denver, Elway said in a statement.

Fox went 49-22, counting playoffs, in four seasons in Denver, where he won four AFC West titles. But Elway didn't like the lack of fire the team displayed in its biggest games, including a 35-point loss in last year's Super Bowl and a 24-13 loss at home as a heavy favorite two weeks ago.

Fox was hired as the Chicago Bears' new coach on Friday.

Kubiak and his staff are expected to bring a discipline and toughness that Elway deemed was lacking in Denver, where a talent-laden roster that featured an NFL-high 10 Pro Bowlers lost at home in the playoffs after a bye for the second time in three years.

In each of the past two seasons, Elway, the team's general manager and executive vice president, found it necessary to address the players himself following particularly bad performances, something the head coach usually handles.

In Kubiak, Elway brings back a man who went down the championship trails with him in the 1990s.

Kubiak's relationship with Elway includes nine seasons as his backup QB, from 1983-91, and four seasons as his offensive coordinator.

After winning his first Super Bowl ring as the San Francisco 49ers' quarterbacks coach in 1994, he returned to Denver on Mike Shanahan's staff and helped draw up the blueprint for the Broncos' two Super Bowl championships following the 1997 and '98 seasons.

Altogether, Kubiak spent 11 seasons as Shanahan's top offensive assistant before leaving in 2006 to coach the Houston Texans. He went 63-66, counting 2-2 in the playoffs, in eight seasons in Houston.

"Gary Kubiak has established a track record of leadership, success and high character during his 30 seasons in the NFL," Elway said in a statement. "While there is no question he is a Bronco, what Gary has learned from his other opportunities around the league, especially in his eight seasons as a head coach, will tremendously benefit our organization."

As Denver's offensive coordinator from 1995-2005, Kubiak helped the Broncos lead the league in scoring (25.2 points per game), total yards (365 yards per game) and rushing (142.2-yard average) over that span. He also coached the team's quarterbacks for eight of those seasons (1995-02), including a four-year period from 1995-98 in which Elway ranked second in the NFL in touchdown passes (101) and fourth in yards passing (13,739).

Knicks end 16-game skid with win over Pelicans



NEW YORK (AP)—The Knicks ended their 16-game losing streak, getting 24 points and nine rebounds from Carmelo Anthony to beat the short-handed Pelicans, 99-92.

Jose Calderon made his biggest basket of a difficult first season in New York, a 3-pointer with 32 seconds left that gave the Knicks a four-point lead. That was just enough to help them hold on for their first victory since Dec. 12 and end the longest single-season skid in franchise history.

Langston Galloway added 21 points for the Knicks, who improved the NBA's worst record to 6-36.

Tyreke Evans had 23 points and nine rebounds for the Pelicans, who were still without Anthony Davis and Jrue Holiday.

Hawks 93, Pistons 82

In Atlanta, the Hawks won their 13th straight game, one short of equaling the team record, as Mike Scott and Paul Millsap each scored 20 points Monday in a 93-82 victory over the Detroit Pistons.

The Hawks haven't lost since Dec. 26 against Milwaukee.

Scott, a backup, had eight points in the fourth quarter. Al Horford added 14 points, seven assists and six rebounds.

The Pistons were trying for their franchise-record eighth straight road win. Greg Monroe led Detroit with 16 points and 20 rebounds. Andre Drummond added 13 points and 18 rebounds, but made only 3 of 12 free throws.

Cavaliers 108, Bulls 94

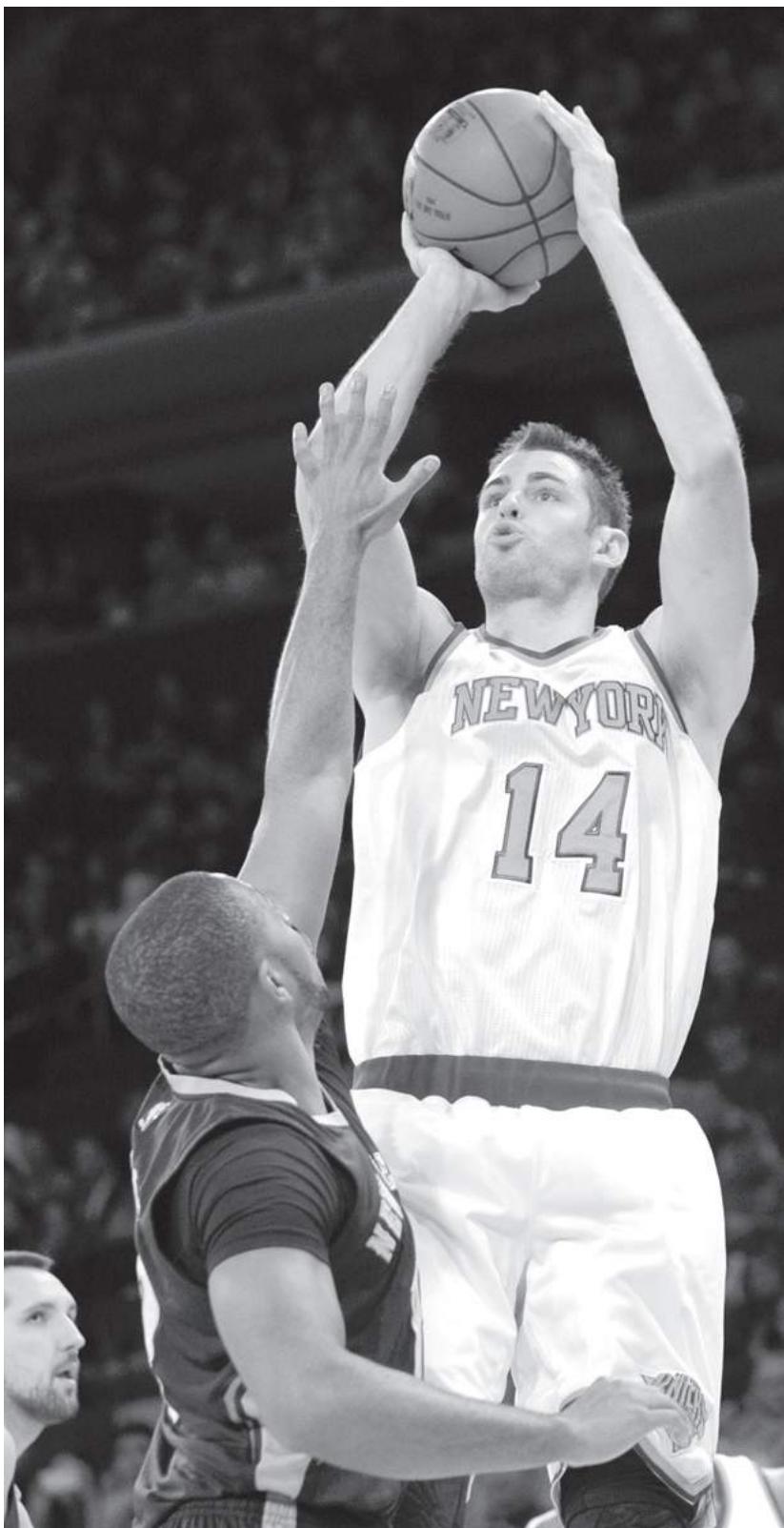
In Cleveland, LeBron James scored 26 points and J.R. Smith added 20 as Cleveland entered a favorable portion of its schedule with a win over Chicago.

Back home after winning two games in Los Angeles to salvage a trip out West, the Cavs had little trouble with the Central Division-leading Bulls. Cleveland opened a 25-point lead in the third quarter and handed Chicago its fourth loss in five games.

Smith made six 3-pointers, Kyrie Irving scored 18 with 12 assists and Kevin Love added 16 points and 12 rebounds for the Cavs, who have won three straight. Cleveland can improve its record with three more home games this week and nine of its next 12 in Quicken Loans Arena.

Rockets 110, Pacers 98

In Houston, James Harden scored a season-high 45 points, including 18 in the



New York Knicks' Jason Smith (14) puts up a shot over New Orleans Pelicans' Eric Gordon during the first quarter of an NBA basketball game Monday, Jan. 19, 2015, at Madison Square Garden in New York. The Knicks won, 99-92.

third quarter as the Rockets beat the Pacers.

It was the 18th 30-point game and fourth with 40 this season for Harden, the NBA's leading scorer.

Houston led by 10 at halftime and used a 33-point third quarter, thanks in large part to four 3-pointers from Harden, to push the lead to 20 entering the fourth.

C.J. Miles had 23 points to lead the Pacers, who have lost five straight.

Harden finished one point shy of his career high. Dwight Howard had 14 points and 17 rebounds for the Rockets.

Wizards 111, 76ers 76

In Washington, Marcin Gortat scored 20 points, and John Wall had 11 points and

Djokovic, Wawrinka advance to 2nd round



MELBOURNE, Australia (AP)—Four-time Australian Open champion Novak Djokovic returned to Rod Laver Arena for the first time as

a husband and father, shrugging off the effects of a cold to beat No. 16-ranked Aljaz Bedene 6-3, 6-2, 6-4 in his first-round match on Tuesday.

Djokovic won the first of his seven major titles at the 2008 Australian Open, then won here in three consecutive years from 2011 to 2013. His 25-match winning streak at Melbourne Park ended in a quarterfinal loss to Stan Wawrinka, who

went on to win the title.

Wawrinka began the defense of a major crown for the first time with a 6-1, 6-4, 6-2 win over No. 100-ranked Marsel Ilhan, taking less than 1 1/2 hours to breeze through the first round.

In a breakthrough 2014 season, Wawrinka claimed his first Grand Slam title, reached a career-high ranking of No. 3 and helped Roger Federer win the Davis Cup for Switzerland for the first time.

He warmed up for the season-opening major by successfully defending his title at the Chennai Open.

"It's great, bringing me a lot of memo-

ries from last year," Wawrinka said of his return. "It was great to come back here feeling happy, happy with my game."

Top-ranked Djokovic had the next match on center court and appeared to be tired and still recovering from illness after his match, saying he'd had a "rough two weeks health-wise but I'm getting up there."

His mood changed suddenly when a court-side interview turned to reflections of 2014, when he won Wimbledon for the second time, married his long-time partner, Jelena, and the couple had a son, Stefan.

"Well those two events are the two

10 assists as the Wizards beat the over-matched 76ers.

Washington went on a 20-3 run for a 27-11 lead late in the first quarter and coasted to the win.

Washington coach Randy Wittman removed his starters after three quarters. Seven Wizards scored in double figures. Kevin Seraphin, who played most of his minutes after the game was decided, had 14.

Hornets 105, Timberwolves 80

In Charlotte, Gerald Henderson scored 17 points and Brian Roberts added 16 as the Hornets defeated the Timberwolves — their seventh win in eight games.

Charlotte's Al Jefferson returned after a nine-game absence due to a groin injury. He had eight points and five rebounds in his 25 minutes. In all, Charlotte's bench outscored Minnesota's reserves 52-31. Reserves Gary Neal had 12 points and P.J. Hairston had 11 for Charlotte.

Clippers 102, Celtics 93

In Los Angeles, Blake Griffin scored 22 points, and DeAndre Jordan had 19 points and 12 rebounds as the Clippers held off the Celtics after losing most of a 23-point lead.

J.J. Redick and reserve Jamal Crawford added 16 points each in Los Angeles' eighth win in 11 games. Griffin came up one rebound short of a double-double in helping the Clippers improve to 4-1 against the Celtics in their last five meetings.

Boston's bench provided most of its offense, with Brandon Bass scoring a leading 17 points.

Warriors 122, Nuggets 79

In Oakland, Klay Thompson scored 22 points, and Stephen Curry had 20 points and eight assists as the Golden State Warriors matched a club record with their 16th consecutive home win in impressive fashion.

The NBA-leading Warriors (33-6) out did Denver (18-23) in nearly every major category, including shooting percentage (54.3 percent to 34.5 percent), rebounds (53 to 39), assists (30 to 17), blocks (six to three) and steals (10 to nine). Ty Lawson had 19 points and six assists, and Jameer Nelson had 14 points and five assists for the Nuggets, who have lost three in a row.

Mavericks, Grizzlies 95

In Memphis, Dirk Nowitzki scored 21 points, including the last eight for Dallas in the final 2 minutes, as the Mavericks

defeated the Grizzlies.

The Grizzlies took a two-point lead with about 4 minutes left, but Dallas outscored Memphis 14-4 the rest of the way.

Monta Ellis led the Mavericks with 25 points and seven assists. Chandler Parsons added 15 points, but was 5 of 14 from the field.

Mike Conley, back after missing two games with a right ankle sprain, led Memphis with 22 points.

Raptors 92, Bucks 89

In Milwaukee, Kyle Lowry scored 18 points and was one of six Toronto players to reach double figures against Milwaukee.

Terrence Ross added 16 points as the Atlantic Division leaders (27-14) won for the third time in 10 games. Ross did not start for just the second time in the last 104 games after he was held scoreless for the only time this season in a 95-93 loss against New Orleans on Sunday.

Milwaukee (21-20), playing for the first time since beating New York on Thursday in London, got 20 points, five rebounds, five assists and four steals from Brandon Knight.

Suns 115, Lakers 100

In Phoenix, Goran Dragic and Isaiah Thomas scored 24 points apiece, fellow guard Eric Bledsoe added 17 and the Phoenix Suns pulled away in the second half to hand the Los Angeles Lakers their fifth loss in a row, the last two without Kobe Bryant, 115-100 on Monday night.

Nick Young scored 24 for the Lakers, who were tied 51-all at halftime but fell behind by 10 in the third quarter and 19 in the fourth.

The Suns won their sixth in a row at home, their longest such streak in four years, and 13th in their last 17 overall.

Trail Blazers 98, Kings 94

In Portland, Damian Lillard scored 22 points, including the go-ahead basket with 1:20 remaining, and the Portland Trail Blazers ended a three-game losing streak Monday night with a 98-94 win over the Sacramento Kings.

Lillard had six points during the final 80 seconds and helped rally the Trail Blazers (31-11) from an 11-point, second-half deficit. Wesley Matthews scored 17 for Portland.

Blazers forward LaMarcus Aldridge left in the second quarter with a left hand injury and did not return. The status of Aldridge, who had 10 first-quarter points, is unknown

6-3, 6-4 and No. 19 John Isner beat Taiwanese qualifier Jimmy Wang 7-6 (5), 6-4, 6-4.

No. 16 Fabio Fognini lost in four sets to Alejandro Gonzalez.

Nishikori, returning to Grand Slam action for the first time since his run to the U.S. Open final, dropped his opening service game but recovered the break quickly and weathered a difficult opening match against Almagro.

Nishikori is coming off a big year in 2014, when he became the first Asian man to reach a Grand Slam singles final. He's determined to go one better and win a major.

"Yeah for sure that was one of my best results in my career that gave me a lot of confidence," the Japanese star said. "I beat a lot of top 10 players."

Lightning lose to Guam in last-second play

By JON PEREZ
jon_perez@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Eastern Lightning dropped a 12-6 decision against Team Guam in the Second Annual Marianas Youth Football Friendship Games held last Saturday at the Raiders field in Tiyán.

The game was tied at 6-6 with less than 10 seconds to go when Team CNMI's defense collapsed and allowed the hosts to reach the end zone for the final tally.

Though the Lighting fell short, it was a big improvement on the visiting squad's performance af-

ter being blown out the first time the two teams met in November 2013 on Saipan.

Lightning quarterback Donavin Ada tried to lead the visitors' offensive thrust early in the game, but the Guam defense held their own and later forced them to punt.

Guam, in their offensive drive, managed to reach halfway of the field. Gabriel Stanley then cut through the CNMI defense to reach the end zone and put the hosts on the board, 6-0.

The Lightning pair of Ada

and Zander Tkél struck hard in the second period to tie the ball-game.

Ada put Team CNMI within 20 yards, while Tkél finished the job after puncturing to a host of Guam defenders to the delight of the Lightning bench.

The game seemed headed into overtime as the score stood at 6-6 until the final seconds of the fourth period.

Guam, however, would not want to disappoint the hometown crowd and found a way to sneak past the CNMI defense for the

Saipan, Pacific Islands Club Saipan, Hyatt Regency Saipan, Dept. of Public Safety, and Div. of Parks and Recreation.

Starting at sea level at the American Memorial Park, the Marianas Coffee Trail Run heads up 1,500 feet to the highest point of the island and goes around the summit of Mt. Tapochau before heading back to AMP. Sites along the way include Japanese-era coffee plantations and the Marianas Coffee Co. plantation.

"Preparations are being finalized for what we expect will be another amazing Marianas Coffee Trail Run on Saturday," MVA community projects Manager Martin Duenas said.

Show time and late registration on race day is at 5:30am, with the race starting at 6:30am.

For more information, contact Ed Diaz at ediaz@mymarianas.com or 670-664-3210. (MVA)

entry to the awards banquet on race day at 1pm. Applications are now downloadable under the EventsCalendar at www.mymarianas.com.

Cash awards will be given to the Top 3 overall male and female finishers in both the long course and short course. A number of raffle prizes will also be given away. Course lengths are 10K and about 20K.

The race is sponsored by Marianas Coffee Co., MVA, KFC Triathlon Club of Japan, and Team PDI. Select prizes are also donated by Hyatt Regency Saipan. Other sponsors are: Aqua Resort Club, Saipan World Resort, Yano Enterprises, Inc./ Kimachi Restaurant, Avis

as Coffee Trail Run is on Thursday with the race featuring some of the greatest views and most challenging terrain in the CNMI.

Participants are reminded to get their registration forms and pay fees at Marianas Visitors Authority's office by 5pm this Thursday to qualify for the early bird fees: \$10 for ages 12 and under, \$15 for ages 13-18, and \$25 for ages 19 and up. An additional \$10 will apply after the early bird deadline. Entry fees include a finishers t-shirt, certificate of participation, and

deep in their positions and failed to return the ball, giving their counterparts at SSHS the easy points. A number of times, the ball just landed in front of the Lady Geckos.

In the other match on the opposite side of the court, Mt. Carmel defeated Kagman in another all-JV game.

Kagman forfeited the first set as it lacked one player to complete the six-member roster inside the court. The player was

late and when she arrived the game started in the second set.

The Junior Lady Ayuyus

tied the match at one set apiece with a 26-24 decision in the second frame.

Kagman, down 18-23 in the second, battled back to tie the count and won the set as Mt. Carmel committed back-to-back errors.

But the Junior Lady Knights won't be denied of the victory and played more

rebound after Vergara's miss and ran the clock, which was down to 15.4 seconds. With the clocking ticking and Fiesta still on top, Shirley's should have committed a preemptive foul, but elected not to, as it hoped to steal possession from the former and have the final shot.

Pablo did pick Jenny Lee's pocket and the former tried to sprint to their frontcourt, but ran into Fiesta defenders at the sideline and lost possession. Fortunately, the ball touched a Fiesta player last before it rolled down. However, Fiesta was left with .9 of a second to put up for a decent shot and that was not enough as Pablo was pressured to throw a Hail Mary after the inbound play and the attempt was way too short, preserving Fiesta's win.

Fiesta's tried to get the two points back to even up the count anew, but muffed both shots with Dianne Pablo overshooting her target at the right baseline and Alexa Vergara missing a putback. Fiesta controlled the

Castillo paced Shirley's with her 25 markers,

In the third game, IT&E walloped Sun Palace, 49-15.

IT&E led by 18 at halftime, 21-3, and was never threatened after that. Five IT&E players scored at least two baskets each in the first half to build a comfortable lead, while Shaina Abadilla drilled the lone field goal for Sun Palace and Marlene Lumabi added a split free throw.

IT&E improved its record to 5-3 for second place behind the unbeaten Armatech and the Top 2 teams will be joined in the semifinals by Fiesta (5-4) and Shirley's (4-4). Kanoa (2-6) and Sun Palace (0-8) are already eliminated.

First Game

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Guam, however, would not want to disappoint the hometown crowd and found a way to sneak past the CNMI defense for the

game-winning play that broke the hearts of the visiting squad.

Despite the loss, Common-

wealth Football League Association president John Blanco commended the gallant effort

put up by the Dave Ada-coached Lightning crew.

A third goodwill match is scheduled in November, which Saipan would be hosting at the CPA Airport Field.

Organizers set limits to 30 golfers

By JON PEREZ
jon_perez@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Port Moresby Golf Club in the National Capital District in Port Moresby hosting the event.

Organizers of the open tryout for the CNMI men's national golf team is advising interested individuals joining this Saturday's event at the Coral Ocean Point Golf Resort to register early.

Check-in time for the one-day event is at 10am, while shotgun starts 11am. The open tryout will follow a gross play format for 18 rounds.

Ed Peters, a member of the Refaluwasch Golf Association, said they will limit the number of golfers to 30 due to the tight schedule at COP.

"We already talked to the people at COP and they are willing to host the tryout at the golf course. We're ready for Saturday and I'm wishing all those who will join to give their best since there are only four slots on the team," said Peters.

"Everybody must work doubly hard to secure a spot on the national team that will compete in the Pacific Games," added Peters, who expressed interest for the coaching post of the four-member men's squad.

The 2015 Pacific Games is set from July 4 to 18 in Papua New Guinea with the Royal

last minute.

A \$100 fee will be collected at the tryouts and after deducting the green fee, the remaining money will serve as start-up fund for the team.

"This will be the seed money of the team. We need to assign someone who will act as caretaker of the money, which will be used to fund the team's trip to Papua New Guinea.

Meanwhile, veteran CNMI golfer J.J. Atalig has asked Rogolifoi if NMSA could write a letter to all golf course managers or owners to allow the team that will be formed to practice in their golf course.

"Hopefully the golf courses on Saipan would accommodate the team and give them the chance to practice. They have no idea yet about the layout of the course in Papua New Guinea," said Atalig.

"Hopefully, the team will comeback with medals around their necks."

New Caledonia dominated the 2011 competition in Noumea, sweeping all four gold medals—men's and women's singles, and team events—and added two silver and one bronze to its stock.

easy. Sculling, the backbone of synchronized swimming, is the hardest to teach and learn. Additionally, learning to scull in an upside down vertical position and descending in a straight line has been challenging," Kindel said.

"During our regular Masters workouts, we would swim underwater along the bottom of the pool, do laps of the various kinds of sculling and several hundred meters of pulling limiting our number of breaths. All of these exercises assisted in building up our strength and breath control," the 63-year-old and 15-year Masters veteran added.

This Saturday, Kindel and company will be performing a kip, two-man back dolphin, an Eiffel Tower, a front walkover, and an oceanita with a 180 degree twist.

"We will also be doing a ballet leg, the tub, pinwheel, marching legs, and torpedo sculling. This routine resulted from collaboration and team effort with everyone volunteering their expertise and time to selecting the music, preparing the choreography, and designing and sewing the costumes," Kindel said.

The synchronized swimming demonstration will take place after the pentathlon meet, which will start at 8:30am.

"In the future we hope to expand synchronized swimming to all ages and perform more routines," Kindel ended.

Coffee Trail early bird deadline tomorrow



The early bird registration deadline for this Saturday's 8th Annual Marianas

Coffee Trail Run is on Thursday with the race featuring some of the greatest views and most challenging terrain in the CNMI.

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SIS

From Page 28

found numerous holes on their opponents' defensive formation.

Saipan Southern, if stats were recorded, could have scored more than 15 points on aces alone, as SIS failed to return the serves many times.

Often, the SIS players manning the frontline were too

deep in their positions and failed to return the ball, giving their counterparts at SSHS the easy points. A number of times, the ball just landed in front of the Lady Geckos.

In the other match on the opposite side of the court, Mt. Carmel defeated Kagman in another all-JV game.

Kagman forfeited the first set as it lacked one player to complete the six-member roster inside the court. The player was

late and when she arrived the game started in the second set.

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game-winning play that broke the hearts of the visiting squad.

Despite the loss, Common-

SSC

From Page 28

Nami Kadokura, and Kaoru Takahashi as members.

Both Kindel and Pierce have experience in synchronized swimming, while the rest learned to swim when they were still in Japan and improved their skills here on Saipan under the guidance of SSC coaches.

Kindel was with a high school synchronized swimming club for three years and performed a duet, a solo, and in group routines. She also practiced on Guam in 1986 with a fellow high school swimmer and prepared and performed a routine for a local TV show.

Pierce, on the other hand, was in the sport for 10 years (7 to 17 years old) and participated in the annual show and performed the solo in her last year. Takahashi joined competitive swimming tournaments when she was in junior high, while Sato is a dive instructor, and Kaga and Kadokura took swim lessons in Japan and resumed classes at SSC Masters two years ago.

Though all six have experience either in synchronized swimming or related sports, Kindel said doing routines is not a piece of cake.

"We are doing only one routine, which is about 3 minutes long, but believe me it isn't

2014 SSS Christmas Youth Futsal Tournament Girls U15 Finals

PHOTOS By ROSELYN B. MONROYO



Matansa's Angel Sally, left, and Shirley's Lady Blues' Mia Carreon fight for ball possession during their title game in the girls U15 division of the 2014 SSS Christmas Youth Futsal Tournament last Saturday night TSL Sports Complex.



Matansa's Carla Ballesteros slides to her right for a save.



Shirley's Lady Blues' Diana Maniacop, right, eludes the defense of Matansa's Lyka Sally.



The Shirley's Lady Blues goalie catches the ball, preventing Matansa's Angel Sally from kicking it.



Shirley's Lady Blues' Mia Carreon, right, dribbles in front of the defense of Matansa's Bernadette Horey.



Matansa's Lyka Sally, left, beats two Shirley's Lady Blues players for the ball possession.



Shirley's Lady Blues' Diana Maniacop, left, joins two Matansa players in a foot race.



A Matansa player, right, dribbles away from a Shirley's Lady Blues defender.



Matansa's Bernadette Horey is tightly guarded by a Shirley's Lady Blues defender.



NFL probing
whether Pats
used deflated
footballs

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Saipan Tribune Sports

28 WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 21, 2015

Knicks end
16-game skid
with win over
Pelicans

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SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Southern JV trips SIS in v'ball



JON PEREZ
A Saipan Southern High School junior varsity member keeps the ball in play while her teammates look on during their game against Saipan International School JV in the Marianas Interscholastic Sports Organization Girls Volleyball League yesterday at the Marianas High School Gymnasium.

By JON PEREZ
jon_perez@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Saiyan Southern High School's junior varsity made short work of its counterparts at Saipan International School and scored an easy 25-17, 25-15, 15-12 win in yesterday's opening game in the 2014-2015 Marianas Interscholastic Sports Organization Girls Volleyball League at the Marianas High School Gymnasium.

The Saipan Southern JV volleyballers found little resistance from SIS and led from start to finish to nail their second straight win after dropping their opening match against MHS JV, 25-23, 25-4, 10-15, on Jan. 8.

The Lady Manta Rays, after that loss, completed a 25-18, 25-20, 15-11 triumph over Mt. Carmel School's JV team last week.



It was SIS JV's second loss in three matches. The Junior Lady Geckos opened the league with a win over Kagman High School JV before they were beaten by MHS JV last week.

In the SSHS-SIS JV game, the Junior Lady Mantas took advantage of a listless Junior Lady Geckos side as they

See SIS on Page 26



ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Shirley's Coffee Shop's Jeraldine Castillo is chased by two Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan defenders during the second half of their game in the 2014 Tan Holdings Basketball Classic last Saturday at the Gillette Multipurpose Gymnasium.

Armotech nears sweep; Fiesta survives

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Armotech is one win away from sweeping the elimination round of the 2014 Tan Holdings Basketball Classic after crushing Kanoa Resort, 43-28, during their women's division game

last Saturday night at the Gillette Multipurpose Gymnasium.

Armotech now has a 9-0 record to remain on top of the six-team field. It will go for the sweep this Saturday when it takes cellar dweller Sun Palace, which is still winless with only two games left in the elimination round.

Lalaine Pagara and Chevy Kate Alipio teamed up to keep Armotech's perfect record, scoring 12 point apiece. Four other Armotech players made it to the board to dominate Kanoa, which had only three players



scoring. Kelsey Lizama led Kanoa with her 13 markers, while Natasha Ngirausui and Rose Jones chipped in 8 and 7, respectively.

While Armotech eased past Kanoa, Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan had a tougher time against Shirley's Coffee Shop before eking out a 45-43 victory.

Shirley's was down by five, 38-43, with 1:50 on the clock, but managed to tie the match

**See ARMATECH on
Page 26**

SSC Dolphins to perform synchronized swimming

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Saipan Swim Club Dolphins will cap the 2014-2015 SSC Pentathlon Swim Meet with a demonstration on synchronized swimming this Saturday at the Kan Pacific Swimming Pool.

The SSC Dolphins are composed of the club's Masters members and parents of SSC swimmers and have been practicing synchronized swimming for about nine months.

"In April of 2014, some



Japanese moms whose children swim for SSC asked me to teach them synchronized swimming. So, informally we practiced approximately for half hour, three times a week during the Masters/Public swim sessions. Generally, 4 to 9 SSC Masters attended

with a few SSC children periodically joining during the summer," said Dolphins coach Suzy Kindel, who is assisted by Carol Lynn Pierce and has Atsuko Sato, Ayumi Kaga,

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CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
SSC Dolphins members practice a synchronized swimming routine during a training session early this month at the Kan Pacific Swimming Pool.